

MAHATHIR-POVERTY
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KUALA LUMPUR, APRIL 5 (BERNAMA) - DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY THAT SOME 90 PER CENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE POOR HAD ALREADY ENJOYED THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY;

THE OTHERS, HE SAID, COULD NOT ENJOY THE BENEFITS BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN DOING.

+THEY JUST DO NOT WANT BENEFITS,+ THE PRIME MINISTER RETORTED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO EXPLAIN THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE FOURTH MALAYSIA PLAN AT HIS OFFICE HERE.

ELBORATING, HE SAID:+THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO MADE BASELESS ALLEGATIONS OR ARE INFLUENCED BY A POLITICAL PARTY IN THE COUNTRY WHICH HAS NO OTHER WORK BUT ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE CONTINUE TO REMAIN POOR SO THAT IT CAN INFLUENCE THEM.

+OR THEY JUST DO NOT WANT TO HEED THE GOVERNMENT'S CALL, ASKING THEM TO WORK HARD AND NOT TO BE CHOOSY WITH JOBS,+ HE SAID.

INFACIT, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID, THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY HAD SUCCEEDED TO A LEVEL WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD EXPECTED.

+BUT, WE MUST BE WILLING TO WORK HARDER SO THAT THE INCOME OF BUMIPUTERAS WILL RISE TO A POINT COMPARABLE TO THAT OF THE OTHER RACES,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.--MORE 1859/HM

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CLARIFYING THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY WHICH OF LATE HAD BEEN THE TARGET OF -CRITICISM FROM VARIOUS QUARTERS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO REDUCE THE RATE OF POVERTY OF 17 PERCENT BY 1990.

HE AGAIN POINTED OUT THAT NOT ONE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD HAD SUCCEEDED IN ERADICATING POVERTY. +THEY HAD ONLY MANAGED TO REDUCE IT,+ HE REMARKED.

CITING THE UNITED STATES, HE SAID THE RATE OF POVERTY THERE WAS 22 PER CENT, COMPARED WITH MALAYSIA'S 30 PER CENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE CRITERIA OF THE POVERTY LINE BECAUSE THIS WAS BASED ON A CERTAIN SITUATION, TIME AND PLACE.

FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT STATISTICS ON POVERTY AS STATED BY THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH UNIT (SERU) AND THAT AT WHICH WAS CONTAINED IN THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE FOURTH MALAYSIA PLAN, WERE DIFFERENT.

THE STUDIES ON POVERTY WERE CARRIED OUT BY SERU IN 1980/81. THE MID-TERM REVIEW'S STATISTICS ON POVERTY RESULTED FROM A STUDY UNDERTAKEN IN 1982/83.--MORE

+WE DREW A POVERTY LINE WHICH IS ARBITRARY IN A WAY. ITS' QUITE OBVIOUS (HOWEVER) THAT IT IS QUITE STATISTICAL(TOO),+ HE SAID.

ON CRITICISM THAT POVERTY WAS MORE EVIDENT IN THE TOWNS, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THIS WAS VERY INCORRECT.

+IF THIS IS TRUE, THEN MANY OF THE TOWN FOLKS WILL MIGRATE TO THE VILLAGES LIKE IN SOUTH KOREA. WHERE THE INCOMES OF THOSE IN THE VILLAGES ARE HIGHER,+ HE SAID.

IN MALAYSIA, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, PEOPLE FROM THE VILLAGES MIGRATE TO THE TOWNS WHERE THE RATE OF POVERTY WAS LOWER.

HE SAID THAT POVERTY IN THE TOWNS COULD BE REDUCED BY THE TOWN FOLKS THEMSELVES BECAUSE THERE WERE MANY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES COMPARED TO THE RURAL AREAS.

THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WAS MORE COMMITTED TO REDUCE POVERTY IN THE RURAL AREAS RATHER THAN IN THE TOWNS.

-- MORE 2005/MB

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ON REMARKS THAT THERE WERE RACIAL UNDERTONES IN THE ALLOCATIONS FOR TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS WAS NOT TRUE.

HE SAID THAT POVERTY IN THE TOWNS WAS MORE EVIDENT AMONGST THOSE WHO MIGRATED FROM THE RURAL AREAS TO THE TOWNS.

+THERE ARE MORE POOR BUMIPUTERAS THAN NON BUMIPUTERAS IN THE TOWNS,+ HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT EVEN GIVE AID TO BUMIPUTERAS IN THE TOWNS BECAUSE +WE HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE RURAL AREAS TO ENSURE THE FOOD SECURITIES FOR THE NATION.+

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR ALSO TOUCHED ON ALLEGATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO HAVE INTEGRATED PADI-PLANTING IN THE RURAL AREAS WOULD MAKE THE RURAL PEOPLE POORER.

HE SAID THAT THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE PEOPLE IN KAMPUNG ASSAM JAWA, KUBANG PASU IN KEDAH HAD RISEN. THEY WERE GETTING MORE INCOME FROM THE PADI FIELDS AND WERE EVEN INVOLVED IN A RATTAN INDUSTRY PROJECT, HE SAID.

THIS SHOWED THAT WORKING IN AN INTEGRATED PADI SCHEME WOULD BRING ABOUT BETTER RESULTS, HE ADDED.

ON CLAIMS THAT THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY HAD RESULTED IN ONLY A FEW PEOPLE BECOMING MILLIONAIRES, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A WASTE OF TIME IF HE HAD ANSWERED A SIMILAR QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

*ARE ALL THE STUDENTS STUDYING IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES FROM RICH FAMILIES,+ HE ASKED +EVEN IF ALL THESE STUDENTS WERE FROM RICH FAMILIES, THEN WE CANNOT SAY THAT ONLY A FEW PEOPLE BECOME RICH,+ HE SAID.

ACTUALLY, HE SAID, MANY OF THOSE WHO STUDIED IN THE UNIVERSITIES WERE FROM POOR FAMILIES AND WITH THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY, THEY HAD SUCCEEDED IN BECOMING PROFESSIONALS AND SENIOR OFFICERS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD DONE A LOT TO HELP THE PEOPLE TO ENHANCE THEIR INCOME.

+NOW WE HAVE SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES IN THE RURAL AREAS AND THIS WILL BE UPGRADED. FURTHER,+ HE ADDED.

+SUCH EFFORTS ARE ENOUGH, MORE THAN ENOUGH IF WE COMPARE THEM WITH ANY GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,+ HE SAID.

-- MORE 2038/MB

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+I CHALLENGE ANYBODY TO SHOW A GOVERNMENT AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH IS CARRYING OUT EFFORTS LIKE THAT BEING UNDERTAKEN IN MALAYSIA. HERE, WE ARE HELPING THE PEOPLE, SO THAT THEY CAN LIVE COMFORTABLY,+ HE SAID.

+THE ALLEGATION THAT ONLY A FEW PEOPLE BECAME RICH WAS MADE OUT OF JEALOUSLY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO WANTED ALL MILLIONAIRES TO BE FROM ONE RACE ONLY.

THE GOVERNMENT, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, WANTED TO CREATE MILLIONAIRES OF ALL RACES.

HE ALSO SLAMMED CERTAIN ACADEMICIANS WHO MADE ANALYSIS IN THEIR AIR-CONDITIONED OFFICES BUT WERE NOT PREPARED TO SHARE THEIR EFFORTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP REDUCE POVERTY --BERNAMA 2123/HM