

Govt policies showing results: PM

24 AUG 1988

JOHORE BARU, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Government policies, especially those formulated to boost the country's economy, were showing the desired results.

He said the benefits accrued from the successful implementation of these policies, like Malaysia Incorporated, were even appreciated by unions as well as civil servants.

Addressing a gathering of civil servants at the Johore Menteri Besar's residence here this morning, the Prime Minister said: "For instance, when we first privatised the Port Klang terminal, the port workers were opposed to the move.

"But now, they even want the entire port privatised because they see the terminal making profits. And when a concern starts making money, the workers stand to gain.

"If the private sector does well in business, the Government also makes money ... through taxes which are used to carry out development programmes and pay the salaries of civil servants."

He said it was for this reason that the Government has been taking the privatisation policy seriously.

"Through privatisation of projects, the Government also hopes to trim the civil service," he said, adding that at present quite a sizeable portion of the Budget went towards paying the salaries of civil servants.

Redistribution

Later in the afternoon, addressing members of Barisan Nasional component parties, Dr Mahathir said the people should ensure a continuation of the coalition form of Government as practised in Malaysia as it was the best system for the country.

In other countries, coalition Governments were formed after elections when no party had a clear majority.

As a result the Governments were often unstable.

In contrast, under the BN system, the parties enter the elections as a coalition, throwing their full support behind all BN candidates.

Dr Mahathir said the BN

system of moderation had enabled co-operation in a multi-racial country.

"Because we need co-operation among the races, we have to moderate our views," he said, adding that extremism would only result in an explosive situation.

"It is better to get 30 per cent or 50 per cent of what one asks rather than asking for a full 100 per cent and not getting it and there is no peace in the country," he said.

On the New Economic Policy (NEP), he said it was not meant to rob the wealth of the non-Malays but was a policy to eliminate the disparity in wealth between the Malays and non-Malays.

There would be strong antagonism when the division between the rich and poor was too extreme and it would be even stronger when it was also between races.

To eliminate such an explosive situation, the Government has tried to tackle the wealth disparity between the races to ensure peace.

The NEP had been relaxed to stimulate the economy so that redistribution of wealth could continue.

Dr Mahathir also had a meeting with members of several Bumiputera associations during which he spoke on the importance of Malay unity.

As the dominant group, the Malays had to be united because it was only through their strength and unity that the rest of the country could prosper.

"The Malays in Umno had unity as their only weapon when they fought the British over the Malayan Union and for independence.

"We cannot afford to allow a split in the community, which some people are encouraging," he said.

At the gathering, 52 PSRM and two DAP members joined the new Umno.