

Be wary of this group, Dr M tells Malay thinkers

BANGI, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today cautioned Malay intellectuals against people trying to mislead them into believing that the New Economic Policy (NEP) only benefited a few Malays.

The Prime Minister said some had succeeded in spreading this belief by pointing to a few wealthy Malays and inciting feelings of envy.

"This has resulted in some of our intellectuals condemning the implementation of the New Economic Policy," Dr Mahathir said.

He asked: "(But) what is wrong if there are a few rich among us? Must it be only others who can be rich?"

"We must remember that if the rich are not these same individuals being pointed out today but others, will the same allegations be hurled?"

"Actually, those who make the allegations do not feel easy that

some of us have taken opportunities under the New Economic Policy and have succeeded."

Dr Mahathir made these remarks when opening the *Second Congress of Malay Intellectuals* at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

The congress was organised jointly by 12 organisations on Malay language, literature, culture, economics and education under

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the patronage of Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said some intellectuals were so influenced by the allegations that they joined these people in condemning a policy which had benefited the Malay community.

He said these intellectuals were so engrossed with the emotions raised that they forgot that it was because of the NEP that there

were now so many Malay intellectuals.

"Is it true that those with the opportunity to seek knowledge at a high level belong to a certain group only?"

"If so, all Malay intellectuals must hail from this select or privileged group only. Your attendance here shows the facts.

"Many educated Malays come from families of fishermen and farmers, from poor and middle-class families, although there are those from the upper class."

He also questioned whether those from the upper class could not take opportunities offered under the NEP.

He called on those who accepted the reality that the NEP had benefited all Bumiputeras and Malays to continue to support it.

Dr Mahathir said it would be sad if intellectuals who had bene-

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Dr Mahathir: Exploit NEP opportunities

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fited from NEP opportunities switched sides and condemned the policy together with those who wanted the Malays to remain backward.

He said Malaysia had now reached the take-off point where the pace of development could be intensified.

"We should not waste time in verbal battles or polemics because we may miss the boat and be left behind forever if we do

not take the opportunities under the NEP."

He said Malay intellectuals were the ones who could help the community progress together with other races.

"We do not intend to seize the rights of others but we are entitled to our rights.

"We already have the intellectual structure. All that is needed is its application in a way that will bring benefits."

The Prime Minister hoped

that the congress would be orientated to reality and achievements as the community needed such an attitude.

Tracing the history of Malay civilisation, Dr Mahathir noted that it was only after the break-up of the Malacca Sultanate that Malay States could be colonised easily.

After over 400 years of colonisation, the Malays had gained independence and were free to chart their own progress.

He said the existence of an educated group of Malays showed they were willing to learn from any source and not only from within the community.

In order to progress faster, he said Malays should be willing to go anywhere in the pursuit of knowledge.

He said they should be prepared to learn even from their enemies.