

Setting pace for nation to become developed

By SHARIF HARON

THE New Development Policy (NDP) maintains the basic strategies of the New Economic Policy (NEP) but with some policy shifts aimed at greater emphasis on poverty eradication and restructuring of society and growth with equity.

In eliminating hardcore poverty, the stress will be on education and training while the restructuring process will rely more on private sector involvement. There will be more focus on human resource development, including moral and ethical values.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the NDP will set the pace to enable Malaysia to become a fully developed nation by the year 2020 "not only economically, but also in terms of social justice, moral and ethical values, political sophistication, quality of life and the administrative efficiency of the Government".

Tabling the Second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP2) in Parliament yesterday, the Prime Minister said national unity remains the ultimate goal of the NDP.

The NDP itself, he said, takes into account the needs of all Malaysians. "There should be no fear or doubts in the minds of any ethnic group that they would lose out."

Besides the greater emphasis to be placed on poverty eradication and involvement of the private sector, the development of an active Bumiputera commercial and industrial community, and of human resource development to achieve growth and distribution objectives will also be given emphasis.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Government will continue efforts towards achieving 30 per cent Bumiputera stake in the corporate sector, but implementation will be flexible and liberal so as not to affect growth, and no specific target date is set.

He pointed out the need for Bumiputeras to be trained in the retail business because their representation in the sector is poor.

On the other hand, he added, the under-representation of other ethnic groups in agriculture, land settlement schemes and public sector employment needs to be corrected.

Considering the progress under the NEP in eradicating poverty and restructuring society, there will be less need for government intervention under the NDP, which stresses more on education and training. Poverty eradication will be more selective, aimed at quality and sustainable results.

To face future challenges, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said, there is need for Malaysia to compete more efficiently in the international market, enhance its position as an investment centre, encourage an efficient and innovative private sector, and reduce reliance on Generalised System of Preferences.