

In embargoed item +Mahathir-Vision+, 'please read the intro as follows. ..Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said, tonight the Vision 2020 of making Malaysia a developed country by that year is not his personal ambition but that of the people.

Here is the corrected version.

Mahathir-Vision

(EMBARGO: For release after 10pm, Sept 2)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the Vision 2020 of making Malaysia a developed country by that year is not his personal ambition but that of the people.

The Prime Minister said he was acting as the voice of the people who wished to become a developed and respected race.

+I am only voicing! in my view, the general opinion. I believe everyone wants progress, and wishes Malaysia to be a developed nation, + he said in the +Wawancara Bersama Perdana Menteri+ programme aired over Televisyen Malaysia.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if someone without position or status in society were to express his wish, opinion or vision, it would not receive attention.

In the hour-long programme, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was interviewed by Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) senior fellow Rustam A. Sani, Utusan Melayu (M) Bhd Group Editor-in-Chief Zainuddin Maidin and Associate Professor Dr Ishak Shari of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Economic Faculty.

His explanation was in response to a question from a member of the panel who said some people viewed Vision 2020 as his own vision.

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02/09/21-38MST

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Mahathir-Vision 2 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

The Prime Minister said if the government did not express the people's aspiration, it would not develop into something that would attract the attention of all those involved in the country's development.

+So, I am merely expressing what I feel the rakyat believe in, not I alone, + he added.

However, he said, anyone was free to interpret whether Vision 2020 was solely his own idea or that of Malaysia.

He said the Vision 2020 idea was unveiled this year to coincide with the launching of a long-term development plan to succeed the New Economic Policy (NEP).

He expressed confidence that his potential successor would continue with efforts towards realising the vision although the style might differ.

The machinery for achieving the objective had been put in place, and all Cabinet members had agreed on and understood the ways to make a success of Vision 2020, he said.

+I do not think whoever is taking over will change the objective, say from 2020 to maybe 3000, or from the target of developed status to a backward nation, + he added.

On fears of becoming an industrialised country might lead to social conflicts, he said such problems were inevitable whatever the stage of development.-- more

♥02/09/21-16MST

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Mahathir-Vision 3 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

Poor and backward nations too had social ills and, in fact, more serious problems to the extent of being despised by the world, he added.

He said, however, Malaysians could start planning from now and try to avoid the social pitfalls they might encounter based on the experiences of other countries.

+And, if we are wise, we can make the people aware of this problem and ways to avoid it. Perhaps, we may not face such serious social problems like in the West where they have lost their moral values and no longer appreciate family ties, marriage and other things, he added.

He said Malaysia's definition of a developed country was one that had integrity, high morals, good ethics and other positive values that would ensure society would not lose its bearing.

+This we should decide from now before we get carried away by our wealth, he said.

The Prime Minister said the country needed to give emphasis on industries as the sector could create more jobs than agricultural ventures.

Citing an example, he said a factory on a 0.4-hectare site could give jobs to 500 people while a padi field of a similar size would, maybe, need only one person to work it. -- more

♥02/09/21-17MST

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Mahathir-Vision 4 Kuala Lumpur (Embargo)

He said with its population having increased to 18.3 million, Malaysia needed to provide 300,000 jobs a year.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the 'government's' primary objective in fighting poverty was to reduce absolute poverty.

Malaysia's record in reducing the rate of absolute poverty was better than that of developed countries, he added.

The Prime Minister reminded the people of the importance of defending the values of the family institution, saying Malaysia would become a welfare state if it lost these values.

The government could extend welfare aid in the form of allowances to the poor, old and handicapped but it could not give them love, he said.

+We can give only money but the family can not only give help but also the feeling of love, and this is very important to the old or handicapped, he said. -- Bernama