

Ensuring Malaysia becomes fully developed by 2020

Being petty won't help, says PM

SEP 14 1991

By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Malaysians should not waste time on trivial issues which hinder positive efforts to ensure that the country meets its targets and becomes fully developed, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians had a responsibility to ensure that the country achieved greater development, remained peaceful and continued to prosper.

Speaking at the opening of the MIC general assembly, Dr Mahathir said the challenges of the future could only be met if there was continued unity among the various races and political stability was further strengthened.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Barisan Nasional chairman, said: "If the people of different racial and religious backgrounds can maintain and consolidate unity and harmony, no other forces can prevent us from being a fully-developed country."

"In this regard, the Barisan Nasional component parties can play an effective role by getting the people to understand and appreciate the Government's objective of attaining a much higher level of development."

Dr Mahathir also said the opposition parties would continue to criticise the BN

Government and highlight old issues, besides creating new ones to confuse the people.

They hoped that this would disrupt the people's unity and undermine the strength of the BN.

"The Opposition do not care whether or not their methods will jeopardise the country's development. They only want to rule."

"They are aware that if the people live in peace and are prosperous, they will not garner any support from the people."

"They know that only disillusioned and dissatisfied people will oppose the Government. Hence, we must not fall into their traps," said the Prime Minister.

Among the issues raised by the Opposition is their allegation that the Government has not been fair to all races. Even in the Indian community there was talk that the Indians were not given a fair share of the economic cake.

Dr Mahathir said: "In actual fact, the BN Government has been fair to all races, and all communities have benefited from the Government's development policies. This is a fact we must recognise and accept."

"We admit that while we have reduced the percentage of poverty in the country, poverty still exists."

The Prime Minister said poverty was not limited to one race only because there

were Malays, Chinese, Indians, Ibans, Kadazans and others who were still poor.

Therefore, the Government continued to give priority to efforts to eradicate the remaining traces of poverty.

"It must be made clear that in the Outline Perspective Plan Two, the Government will not spare any effort to wipe out poverty irrespective of race," Dr Mahathir added.

In the free market economic system that was practised in the country, everyone had the opportunity to improve his lot.

The Government provided ample opportunities for anyone who had the initiative and drive to work hard to be successful, he said.

Therefore, no particular community should feel alienated when the nation's wealth was being distributed. The question of being economically deprived did not arise, he added.

He said the existing economic cake would be fairly distributed but what was more important was that unity and political stability were strengthened in order for more development to take place.

"If political stability and unity are threatened, then it will be difficult for us to achieve economic growth," he said.

□ MIC TO SET UP \$100M FUND: P2