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Mahathir-peace

COUNTRY PEACEFUL OWING TO FAIR GOVT, SAYS MAHATHIR

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JITRA, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- The peace and stability prevailing in Malaysia are the result of the government being fair towards all the communities, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Although the government had to assist Bumiputeras a little, non-Bumiputeras also had rights in this country, he said.

Of importance is that the government undertook balanced development for all the communities, he said when addressing the people at the Dewan Jitra here. Dr Mahathir is on a day's visit to the Kubang Pasu district in Kedah.

Dr Mahathir, who is the MP for Kubang Pasu, said Malaysia had learnt a lot from the racial riots of May 13, 1969.

"Unjust measures are not implemented by the government, and as a result there is stability," he said. -- more

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The prime minister said the peace and stability had brought much development to the country and provided the people with plenty of economic opportunities.

He said there was no necessity for the government to restrict the other communities to enhance Bumiputera participation in the economy because there were plenty of opportunities and all the communities could cooperate to take advantage of these.

Bumiputeras also could do business because it was not difficult to start a business but many who failed were those who were unable to contain their greed, he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were plenty of business opportunities and the government encouraged business on franchise because it was an easy way for a person to start a business.

He said the country's economic growth was so intensive that workers were enjoying better salaries. -- more

KHY MGN

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Dr Mahathir said he did not agree with the view of some people that economic growth was too fast for the Malays to catch up.

"But we have no choice. If we are slow, the Malays are also slow," he said.

He said the government had implemented various measures to increase Bumiputera participation to 30 per cent of the economy, including by selling shares at low prices to them, but some among them had sold back the shares.

Nevertheless, he said, there were Bumiputeras adept in business who bought shares worth hundreds of millions of ringgit in large companies on their own without government help.

"There are Bumiputera entrepreneurs who have bought three large hotels at one go in Sri Lanka, who have obtained logging concessions in Papua New Guinea, and who have gone to the Solomon Islands," he said. -- more

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On allegations by PAS that the government was giving too much attention to economic progress and world affairs, he said: "The situation in the country does not allow for the measures planned by PAS and we are not doing anything contrary to Islam."

He said the PAS government in Kelantan was still unable to fulfill many of its election promises, including the pledge to implement the "hudud" (Islamic penal) laws.

"We are not opposed to hudud laws...but Islam allows flexibility in certain cases," he said.

He said that though there were ripples prior to Umno elections, the elections were carried out democratically and after that the members closed ranks.

"But in the case of PAS, the members will not talk to one another when angry and when someone dies, they will not attend the last rites," he said.

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Mahathir-peace 5 (last) Jitra

In this connection, Dr Mahathir reminded the people to maintain the existing peace and stability, to work hard and to study to achieve greater progress.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived this morning, visited the newly opened Mara stalls and the Kubang Pasu public library building under construction in Jitra.

He attended Friday prayers at the Masjid Pulau Ketam and visited the Pedu Dam tourism project.

He was accompanied on the visit by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff and Tanjung assemblyman Datuk Haji Hanafi Ramli. -- Bernama

KHY MGN

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