

PM raps ungrateful intellectuals

KUALA LUMPUR: Malay intellectuals who criticised the Government and the New Economic Policy do not seem to realise that they have been the beneficiaries of what they spoke out against, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said these critics

supported allegations by foreigners that the NEP and the privatisation programme had benefited only a small group of elite rich Malays.

The critics were made up of not only non-bumiputra opposition parties and non-Malay socialist parties but also educated

Malays and bumiputras.

"If not for the NEP, they (Malay intellectuals) would not have obtained their education or the high position they hold.

"They are actually the elite Malays who have benefited from the NEP but they are ungrateful. If they think the NEP benefited only a small group of Malays, they are that small group," he said when opening the Umno general assembly yesterday (full text Pages 18-20).

The Prime Minister said the NEP and the privatisation programme had benefited all levels of society.

He said no one could honestly say that they had not gained in some way from either policy.

Dr Mahathir also said it was impossible for everyone to be rich as it would only mean that the country would become so expensive that from a purchasing power point of view, everyone would be poor.

He reiterated that the poor could always depend on the rich for a living by getting jobs from them while the Government could carry out development work through taxes on the rich.

"For makers of policies and plans to help the Malays and bumiputras, nothing disappoints them more than hearing Malays criticising these policies and plans."

On workers, Dr Mahathir warned of increasing production costs and against adopting western-style trade union stance.

"Solving industrial disputes through test of strength is primitive.

"We do not have to accept this western concept but use our own ways.

"Workers must realise that the benefits they are enjoying through the country's rapid development was achieved with industrial action," he added.

On the new values that

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Don't act rashly, polls losers told

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Malays should adopt to succeed, Dr Mahathir said they should never give up and should test themselves to the limit.

On the party elections, Dr Mahathir said losers must accept the fact and not behave rashly because they were angry at being defeated.

"There is no shame in defeat. The honourable losers are those who continue to serve the party.

"For the winners, I remind them that today is theirs, tomorrow they can also fall. Therefore, don't be proud and arrogant because of your victory.

"Victory will be meaningless if we get only half the party. Do not think we can take all and sack those who are not with us. The losers also have support and they still have rights."

The Prime Minister

also told the delegates that the kind of leaders required to lead the party and nation must not only be sharpminded with ideas but also those with experience who could differentiate and evaluate ideas from others.

Dr Mahathir also defended his decision to remain neutral in the party contest but apologised if any of his actions had been misinterpreted as being biased.

He expressed confidence that the party would close ranks after the elections because of the 1987 experience which led to its deregistration.

Asked if there was going to be a general election soon following the changes in the party lineup, Dr Mahathir said he had until the end of 1995 to call for an election and that there were many other factors to consider.