

Success stories of Umno

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WE are thankful to Allah for His blessings that we are able once again to hold the general assembly of our party, Umno.

I, on behalf of the party and the supreme council, welcome all heads and representatives of the Barisan Nasional component parties, guests, delegates and observers to this assembly. May Allah give His blessings and guidance to us.

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

We are thankful to Allah that after 36 years of independence, the nation's achievements in all fields remain good. While many countries which had gained independence at the same time as us had failed to achieve the desired progress and instead became worse than before independence, Malaysia had surged ahead and progressed rapidly. Ninety per cent of the development seen in Kuala Lumpur has been achieved after independence. The same is true in other areas, rural and urban.

Today our country is not only peaceful and stable in terms of politics and security but its economy also continues to expand rapidly. Consistently, we have been successful in recording high growth rates. For the past five years running, we have recorded an average economic growth of more than eight per cent. What

to control prices and curbed inflation.

We have also succeeded now in laying down firmer economic basics in our country. From an agriculture country which depended solely on the export of raw materials, the economic activities of our country have widened to encompass the modern manufacturing industry. Today, the manufacturing sector has become the main activity of the country and the export of manufactured goods is about 71 per cent of the total national exports.

The encouraging economic growth has enabled us to focus on the development of the nation. From the rapid development, Malaysians have access to education, health and infrastructure facilities comparable to that of developed countries. There are no other developing countries which can supply electricity and water to almost all rural areas in addition to good road network and other amenities.

We have also succeeded in reducing poverty especially among the Malays and the bumiputras. The poverty rate has been reduced from 49.3 per cent in 1970 to 13.6 per cent last year. The Government will continue to emphasise efforts to reduce the poverty rate. God willing, we will eradicate absolute poverty but not relative poverty.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech at the Umno General Assembly, Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur on Thursday, Nov 4 1993.

multi-racial, a situation which will normally complicate the administrative machinery in most multi-ethnic nations.

TOWARDS A DEVELOPED NATION

As we know, we are putting in motion strategies towards becoming a developed nation. We want to achieve that status because we want to ensure that Malaysia continues to become totally independent. With the achievement of a developed nation status, we believe we will not be easily pressured by the superpowers in fields of politics, economy and society. We also want Malaysians to enjoy a higher standard of living in addition to being efficient and able in all fields especially in using sophisticated technologies to develop the country.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MALAYS AND BUMIPUTRAS

We also cannot deny the fact that the Malay community and the bumiputras as a whole have made headway in many areas.

If during the British colonial era the Malays and the bumiputras were only farmers and low ranking civil servants, now our

been unsuccessful even in nation-building. And this includes nations which are already developed. There are not many governments which are successful in overcoming most of their national and people's problems.

We are thankful because the majority of the Malays and bumiputras who have been successful did not forget to show their gratitude. Those who forget are few but as usual they attract attention.

Unfortunately, not all Malays and bumiputra welcome this success. When outsiders alleged that the New Economic Policy (NEP) and privatisation only benefited the elite and rich Malays, the non-bumiputra opposition parties and non-Malay socialist parties welcomed such an allegation. Some of the educated Malays and bumiputras also accepted it.

Actually, they themselves, who have the intellect and position which allow their views to attract attention, are also among those who benefited from the NEP. Without the NEP, they would not have had the education and hold high positions. They

is more encouraging is that this high growth rate is achieved minus the high inflation rate. This year, the country's economy is expected to grow at a rate slightly higher than eight per cent. The unemployment rate is low, at 3.6 per cent. According to international definition, our nation has achieved full employment because those who are still unemployed are actually by choice and not because there are no jobs. The presence of many immigrants in our country is because there are more of job opportunities than the unemployed.

SOLID ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STANDING OF THE COUNTRY

The financial standing of the country is strong and as of today we have a reserve of about RM57 billion. This is the highest figure ever achieved. We are fortunate because we have a small external debt. Many countries in Latin America and Africa cannot expand their economies because they are forced to pay back huge sums of external debts which have eaten into a large portion of their income. We are thankful that we need not depend on foreign financial aid and handouts. To a certain extent this has given Malaysia some freedom in presenting and voicing out its views on controversial issues at the international level.

The standard of living of Malaysians now is far higher than the period before independence. The per capita income of the population is now RM8,350 compared with RM1,937 in 1970. But if we take into consideration the purchasing power of our currency or in accordance with the "Purchasing Power Parity" it is doubled. This is because we have managed

EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION

We are also thankful to have an administrative machinery which we can be proud of. It is not only efficient, disciplined and productive but it is also of high quality and on par with the administrative machinery of developed countries. This has enabled us to implement the development process smoothly and effectively.

We have introduced a lot of changes in our administrative system. If in the past our administrators were less co-operative with the private sector, today we have made the public and the private sector a team which can work together to spur national development. Matters which we think are suitable to be managed by the private sector have been handed over to it through the privatisation process.

For the administrators, the Government has formulated a remuneration system which accords appreciation for their performance. The "passengers" will not get the same treatment as those who work hard and are productive. Salary increases and promotions will be based on their contributions to administrative performance. In this way, we believe productivity and quality will increase.

Of course, government servants who do not benefit from this system will be frustrated. But the rakyat will be more frustrated if they don't get the services they deserve.

The New Remuneration System is a novel and unique approach. Time will judge if the system is good or otherwise. There is no need to predict. What is needed is a practical test.

Excellent achievements will be more significant because Malaysia is

fortunes have changed tremendously. We have Malay and bumiputras now who are heads of department, scientists, actuaries, nuclear physicists, surgeons and specialists in various medical fields, pilots, bankers and well known corporate figures. There are those who manage gigantic corporations with assets worth billions and bold enough to buy over big and well known companies in the open market as well as making complex mergers and acquisitions.

What is more encouraging is that most of the successful Malays and bumiputras are from the rural areas and from farming, fishing and settler families.

If in the past it was difficult to find the Malays and the bumiputras doing business in the towns and cities, today many of them can be found there. Many big buildings in town are owned by Malays and the bumiputras when in the past they could not afford even double-storey shophouses.

These are among the success stories of the Malays and the bumiputras. Their achievements have proven that the Malays and bumiputras have the ability and talents to progress and be successful in any field if they are truly interested and given the chance and sufficient training.

These successes are also Umno's success which nobody can deny.

The Malays and bumiputras who have made it as scientists, corporate figures, professionals and others have Umno and the Government led by Umno to thank. Let no one say that any Government will do it because it is its responsibility. In fact there are many governments in the world which have not helped groups that have been left out and have

are also the elite group who have gained from the NEP but are ungrateful. If they think that the NEP has benefited only some of the Malays, they are those Malays.

Actually the NEP and the privatisation policy have benefited all levels of the rakyat. Assistance and the education opportunities at all levels, agricultural aids, facilities for the rural folk, poverty eradication programmes, the distribution of shares among giant companies through Permodalan Nasional Berhad and other trust agencies, the sale of privatised company shares to workers and the bumiputras ... all these are based on the NEP and privatisation. Nobody can claim they have not benefited from the NEP and Privatisation.

It is true that some bumiputra-owned companies have succeeded in the tender and the taking-over of privatised government agencies and companies. But, can the government transfer its companies and department to people who do not have the capital and experience in business? It is also impossible to transfer the departments to the workers. But since there are people with the capital and the experience to manage are willing to buy some of the privatised bodies, thus the workers are also given the opportunity to purchase the shares specially allocated to them. And when the companies are listed in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, the public can also purchase their shares. If they keep the shares, they will also enjoy the increase in the value.

If it seems that those who benefit from these opportunities are those who are close to government leaders, it is because the government

purposely approach talented businessmen and entrepreneurs. They can help the government to successfully implement government programmes. But more people who are closer to ministers do not gain anything. The criteria is based on ability, and not because of family links or friendship.

To rouse public anger, the easy way is to criticise the rich. The socialist and communist ideologies are based, among other things, on the hatred of the poor towards the rich. But now we know that these ideologies have succeeded in making the people poorer and not wealthier. After 70 years, communism practitioners realise that communism and socialism are based on hatred against the rich, which did not benefit anyone.

In any society, there are bound to be the poor and the wealthy. We can create a society consisting of only the poor. But it is impossible for us to create a wholly rich society. If everyone is rich, all the services and items will be expensive because they are supplied by the rich. Since all goods are expensive, everyone in society cannot afford to buy such items and services. This will mean that, in terms of purchasing power, all of them are poor.

On the other hand, in a society where there are rich people, the poor can also benefit from them. The poor will gain employment created by the rich. Besides that, wealthy people will be imposed high taxes and the government can use the money to provide facilities for the poor.

This is not the first time I am talking on the rich and poor issue. I have to talk about it again because there are Malays who are willing to criticise government policies which were formulated to

help the Malays, because they are easily influenced by jealousy and hatred towards those who are richer among them.

For those who formulate policies and programmes to help the Malays and bumiputras, it is disheartening to know that the Malays criticise such policies and efforts which are aimed at helping them. The people who condemn are actually those who do not want to see poor Malays, but they also do not want to see the Malays successful. But they also do not have any plan to do something for the Malays to progress. They are willing to enjoy the benefits for themselves without feeling grateful. Actually, these people are not thankful. We also understand why outsiders do not want to see the Malays and the policies formulated by the Malay-led Government succeed. We also understand why the non-bumiputras in the opposition parties do not like this. But we are disappointed when there are Malays who enjoy such benefits who do not like to see the success of their own people.

WORKERS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In a civilised society, laws and procedures are prepared for a perfect, safe and peaceful living. The judicial system is created to seek justice and to resolve misunderstandings without making any of the affected parties losing too much.

Only disputes between employers and workers are not included in this approach. On the other hand, the primitive approach is used — that is "the test of strength" through strikes and other industrial actions. The strong wins.

This method is damaging because decisions are not based on fairness and the ability to accede to de-

mands but towards the needs of stopping the damage due to the "test of strength." Salaries are paid not due to the work done but the ability to cause damage. As such, costs go up and competitiveness declines. Sometimes the business has to close down.

If we do an in-depth study, one of the main factors which caused the developed nations to suffer from economic recession is the high production cost which has priced their goods out of the open market. But their workers and trade unions continue to use the "test of strength" for higher pay. With that, their economies continue to suffer from recession although other factors such as capital, technology and internal market give them comparative advantage.

As long as our production cost is low, we will be able to compete, develop and continue to progress. But if we also use "the test of strength" to solve any industrial dispute we will surely be affected by the increased cost and reduced competitiveness. This will affect us even more because we do not have our own technology, lack capital and our internal market is small.

Actually the West's style is not always correct. We should not take their suggestions wholly. Settling industrial disputes through the "test of strength" is a primitive way. It is a shallow manifestation of western civilisation and we cannot accept this way. Rather, we should use our own way.

We cannot deny that there are employers who are unfair towards their workers. If this happens, the affected groups, namely the workers and employers, cannot be the judge. In a dispute between two parties, only a third party can judge it

fairly. Why must we have a "test of strength"? What will happen to any society if all their problems are solved through the "test of strength"? Can society be peaceful and progress? All of us should ponder these matters.

The government's aspiration is for all workers in Malaysia to earn a high salary. A developed nation is meaningless to workers if they continue to get low salaries. However, the amount of earnings is not the main thing. It is because the income can be increased by reducing the value of money. The value of money will go down when cost and the inflation rate increase. It is also when we pay the salaries with money like the Italian lira, for example, we will get a salary that is very high but the goods we purchase will not increase. Likewise, when we reduce the value of our ringgit to 50 sen, we increase our salary to twice, but our purchasing power will not increase. We will not be rich just because our money is more.

The Government feels that we can increase salaries meaningfully, that is without reducing the value of the ringgit or increasing the cost of living. For this, we need the workers' co-operation to curb inflation. The Barisan Nasional Government will keep its promises unless unforeseen circumstances happen. The workers should realise that the results of the country's development is enjoyed directly by the workers without the need for any industrial action. Therefore, believe in the Barisan Nasional Government's promises. Even if the Government has not promised anything, the Government will still do it. After all, this Government is elected by the workers. It is impossible that the millions of votes given to the Barisan Na-

sional came from the towkays. That is why the Government will continue to strive for the workers as it has for the others in society. All levels of society will enjoy the benefits as long as Malaysia continues to progress under the Barisan Nasional government.

CHANGES DUE TO PROGRESS

The world is changing rapidly. The Cold War is over. The world which used to be bipolar, is now unipolar. Communism which at one time was the alternative system to democracy has collapsed.

Another interesting thing is that the developed nations can regress while those who were once left behind can go forward. The opinion that under-developed nations cannot catch up with the developed nations is wrong. If a suitable formula is used and coupled with hard work, God willing, developing countries can compete with developed nations. This has been proven by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. There is a possibility that China will be one of the most developed nations and will be a superpower.

Today, the world admits that the most dynamic economies are located in the Far East including South-East Asia. Malaysia has been included in the most dynamic nations group.

Malaysia's achievement has been such that the volume of shares traded at the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange exceeded that traded at the New York or Tokyo stock exchanges.

For Malaysia to be a developed nation is no longer impossible. Vision 2020 is no more a dream. This vision can become reality. But it will not happen by itself. What we have achieved up to now has not been coincidental. It was the result of planning and action. To achieve

jective is not static and is constantly moving ahead.

The language of a community that is not progressive will not command respect. On the other hand, the language of a progressive and knowledgeable community will not only be respected but will be studied by others. Those who love the national language must first work hard to bring success to the community as quickly as possible. In this way, the language will develop and become respected. Those who do not work to develop their community do not love their language.

There may be some who ask what is the use of us chasing after all this progress. They say we should be satisfied with what we have achieved. Unfortunately, if we do not progress we will be left behind, colonised, oppressed and humiliated. A large section of the population of this country are Muslims. Muslims all over the world are being murdered, tortured and driven out of their own countries because they are weak, unprogressive, constantly begging and depending on others. Are we Malays willing to be colonised again? Do we want the fate of other Muslims to befall us? Not using the opportunities that are available in this country is to be unthankful for the blessings God has given us.

However, chasing after progress has its dangers. We may become so obsessed with it we forget ourselves. This is what has happened to several other advanced communities. To avoid this, spiritual development and religious education must balance efforts towards material and intellectual progress.

ly bombarded, murdered and chased out of their homes. Such is the case also with the Muslims in Somalia who are starving and dying. What saddens us even more is that the Muslims cannot do anything. We pin our hopes on others to resolve the problems of Muslims.

This is because today there is not a single Islamic major power which can act effectively or influence such international organisations as the United Nations into taking action. This is also due to the fact that there is no unity and brotherly ties among Islamic countries.

With the end of the Cold War and the fall of communism, there is a great likelihood that the west will shift its attention to Islam. There are already signs that the west regards Islam as a threat. It is possible we may become a direct target of the west's attacks. In the present state of our weakness, the attacks by the west could destroy us completely.

Even though Malaysia is a small and weak Islamic country, we feel that it is our responsibility to voice our opinion at the injustices perpetrated against Muslims. That is why, on Bosnia and other issues, our voice has been so loud. We have also committed ourselves to international peace efforts in Somalia and Bosnia. We have contributed troops to the United Nations peacekeeping force.

In addition, we have also worked to convince the world that Islam is a progressive religion that does not want to antagonise anyone. To create a greater understanding of Islam among the non-Muslims, we have set up the Institute of Islamic Understanding (Ikim) and

very important.

The decline of Muslims began when a group of Ottoman Turkish theologians ignored this balance and blocked the study of other areas of knowledge except those concerning Islam. They took this step because they saw that in the Christian world the non-clergy was beginning to exert influence over the royal houses of Europe until they succeeded in separating the church from government when previously the church controlled government. With the division, the clergy was pushed aside. The Turkish theologians at that time feared their influence over the Ottoman government would similarly diminish if more people gained knowledge in other areas. The action of the Turkish theologians led to a decline in the people's knowledge and Turkey grew increasingly weak until it was no longer a big power. And when the Ottoman empire broke up, the Muslims and Muslim territory were divided among the western nations. Since then the Muslims have not been able to rise up again and there is no longer any major Islamic power.

In Malaysia now there is also the view that knowledge not related specifically to Islam and its practice is not important, but also dangerous. As a result, many young Malays are not keen to seek knowledge other than that concerning Islam. There have been some who suddenly gave up their so-called secular studies to go after what is perceived as knowledge for the hereafter. Because those who are talented in specialised areas of knowledge are few among the Muslims in

that will ruin Muslims and prevent efforts to restore the strength of Muslims.

Turkish history did not end with only the ulamas losing power and the nation becoming weak. Disappointed with their nation's weakness, a group of young Turks surfaced and overthrew the Ottoman government and formed a secular government. It was clear then that the attempts by the Turkish ulamas to retain their influence within the empire ended with them being directly excluded and isolated from the government. Their authority totally disappeared. We fear that because of the actions of a group of religious scholars in Malaysia will cause the Muslims to become weak and stagnant, the Muslims of this nation will, in the end, be disappointed and try to totally prevent religious influence on the nation's government. If this happens, it will be a tragedy not only for the religious group but also for the nation.

Umno gives priority to a balance between the world and the hereafter. Umno is not extreme nor fanatical. We practise moderation because it is in line with the teachings of Islam. We believe that a combination of people knowledgeable in various fields including religion will be better and more beneficial to the Muslims. We may not be a superpower but we believe that Muslims in Malaysia who are moderate, balanced and progressive will contribute towards enhancing the dignity and respectability of Muslims and Islam. This combination will, in a way, bring back the glory days of Islam. And Islam will be safe.

something, both the government and the people must put in effort and work efficiently. Correction must be made as soon as a mistake or shortcoming is uncovered.

CULTURE AND THE NEW MALAY

A community does not progress or regress merely because of natural circumstances. It hinges on the values the community adheres to and practises. That was why the Arabs of old who were ignorant and superstitious did not progress. But when they accepted Islam and adopted new values in their lives they succeeded to such an extent that they conquered half the world and established a pre-eminent empire and civilisation.

If until several years ago the Malays and bumiputras were backward compared to the other communities, it was not because of their nature or character. When they altered their cultural values, their performance improved.

Indeed, the form of the new Malay culture that needs to be created must be suited to progress. If we intend to compete with and overtake others, we must not continue to take the old approach which caused us to lag behind. Even though we believe everyone has a limit to his ability but without trying our best we may never find out what our limit is. Furthermore, a person unskilled in one area may have a talent in another. We must make a serious attempt first before we decide that we have no