

# PM: Policies have created wealthy Bumi traders

JITRA, Sat. — The New Economic Policy and National Development Policy have successfully produced quality and wealthy Bumiputera entrepreneurs and bridged the economic gaps among the various races, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Although some quarters were earlier doubtful of the effectiveness of the NEP in restructuring society, the achievements had been very encouraging.

"Today, it is not unusual to stumble upon wealthy Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

"Even the Penan leaders are wealthy. When we come up with programmes like the poverty eradication programme, there are Malay entrepreneurs who come forward and contribute RM1 million to help the fund.

"In those days, only Chinese businessmen were known to have made such a hefty contribution," he said at the meet-the-people session at Sekolah Menengah Hosba here.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Law Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Deputy International Trade and Industries Minister Chua Jui Meng and state dignitaries.

About 3,000 people, including rubber smallholders, turned up at the gathering. Members of BN component parties added colour to the gathering with their party flags and banners.

Dr Mahathir said people of all races and walks of life had benefited from the NEP and the National Development Policy and this had in a way reduced the gap among the races.

"The purpose of these policies are not to oppress any particular race but to bridge the economic gaps between the races.

Dr Mahathir said both policies were attractive to all, including the investors who, through their investments, had created vast job opportunities. He said jobs were abundant as proven by the presence of more than one million foreign workers in the country.

"The Government also taxes rich people to provide aid and facilities to the poor. Vocational trainings are also provided to help children from poor families.

Dr Mahathir said the peo-

ple's quality of life under the Government's policies had improved a lot.

Nowadays, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and even universities are close by.

"During my schooldays, there was only one secondary school in Kedah, that is the Sultan Abdul Hamid College (in Alor Star).

"I was among the lucky 30 to be enrolled in the school. Today we (in Kedah) have everything, even a university," he said.

Dr Mahathir said his parliamentary constituency of Kubang Pasu had been very well developed and some people from the area were now holding highly professional jobs.

"We are proud that we have a pilot flying Boeing 747 who hails from Kodiang," he said.

On the gathering, the Prime Minister said it was only in a peaceful country like Malaysia that such a gathering could be held.

"Peace in the country does not come naturally, we have to work for it. Countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Rwanda are not enjoying this prosperity," he added.

Dr Mahathir quipped that he was lucky to be elected by the people of Kubang Pasu. "I have been your representative for 20 years now. I may not have been PM if not for your trust."

Later, the Prime Minister launched a book written by Dewan Negara Speaker Tan Sri Mohamed Zahir Ismail on the history of the 70-year-old Sekolah Melayu Hosba.

The book titled *Secebis Sejarah Sekolah Melayu Hosba dan Sekitarnya*, is a semi-autobiography of Mohamed Zahir, who recorded the goings-on in the school during his primary education there.

Dr Mahathir, in his speech, urged the people to value all events in their life as it could prove to have historical value.

He said many people had neglected to do so in the past resulting in a great loss not only to themselves but also to others.

In Langkawi, Dr Mahathir visited an exhibition on powerboat at Kuah jetty held in conjunction with the Malaysia Off-Shore Power Boat International Championship.

The Prime Minister will flag off the race tomorrow. He is also scheduled to open the Jetty Point Complex and a chocolate fair.