

Fairness and fairplay top priority, says PM

KUALA KLAWANG (Negri Sembilan), Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said fairness and fairplay would be the Barisan Nasional Government's top priority in steering the nation towards attaining the status of a developed nation.

He assured the people that the Government would protect the interests of all races irrespective of whether they are Iban, Murut, Bajau, Melanau, Malay, Chinese or Indian.

"We will not rob from one group to provide for another in our effort to reach the ultimate objective to become a developed nation," he said.

He said the Government would be fair in distributing the nation's wealth to all.

"The people will get whatever they are entitled to," he said, adding that this however, did not mean that a petty trader for instance, would be given a licence to manufacture cars.

"It will be pointless to do so as he would not have the capacity to succeed.

"A petty trader will certainly be given facilities like a place to carry out his business, loan and training as this would be more appropriate.

"This is what fairness means," he said adding that sometimes, equitable distribution (of wealth) would only result in unfairness.

Therefore, at times, he added the rich also required Government assistance to enable them to continue to prosper.

The Government would be able to get revenue through taxation.

Addressing a gathering of Barisan Nasional supporters at the Kuala Klawang

town field near here, Dr Mahathir said the method adopted by the Socialists and Communists by robbing from the rich to give to the poor was not only unfair but had proved to be a failure.

"When they (Communists and Socialists) seize the wealth of the rich, they can only do so once. But if you allow them to prosper, you can tax them and the revenue can be distributed to the poor," he said.

The Prime Minister also

said the BN Government was forward looking and made concrete plans for the future.

"We know where we are heading and will make the necessary preparations as without a proper vision, the country will not progress," he said.

He said the BN Government had drawn up its objective not for 10 or 15 years but 30 years ahead.

Without a concrete objective, he said it would be

impossible to reach the ultimate destination, adding that now the Government could pool its energy and resources to achieve its vision of becoming an industrialised nation.

On the election, he said it would be impossible for the Opposition especially Parti Melayu Semangat 46, to form the Government as it could not even put up sufficient candidates to contest in all constituencies.

The BN, he added aspired to form the Government and would be contesting in the 192 parliamentary and all State constituencies in the general election.

He advised the small parties not to waste their resources by contesting in the election.

He also said that the electoral pact among parties like Semangat 46, Pas and DAP would be shortlived and would be dissolved after the election.

Dr Mahathir was confident that the people were anxious to see that the BN Government was returned to power to enable it to continue with the development programme for the benefit of the people.

He said the Government had proven that it had never turned renegade on its promises unlike Pas which had hoodwinked voters in Kelantan by promising to do away with various forms of taxes in the 1990 general election.

But when it had formed the Government, not only were the taxes not abolished, but the people have to pay even more, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the Government would continue to increase the efficiency of civil servants in order to provide better services to

the public.

He also hit out at Semangat 46 and DAP for making use of Malaysia's first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj in their campaign in the 1990 general election. Because of this Tunku, who was a former Umno leader, died not as a party member.

However, despite that Dr Mahathir said the Government would not forget his contributions and services to the country and had named the new administrative centre, Putra Jaya, (formerly Perang Besar) after the Tunku.

Speaking later, Dr Mahathir said Tunku could not be blamed as he was made use of by the Opposition.

"The Opposition made use of Tunku. Cut him off completely from me, preventing me from explaining anything to Tunku.

"With this, the Opposition, especially Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) (Semangat 46 president) managed to instigate Tunku not to recognise Umno.

"They, including DAP, used Tunku's influence in Penang and other places and even brought him on stage. They had no consideration for his failing health," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he knew that deep in Tunku's heart, he was an Umno man.

Also present at the gathering were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad, National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Napsiah Omar, Deputy Land and Co-operative Development Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus and leaders of BN component parties from the State.