

PM: Nothing less than true co-operation

By Farush Khan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the sincere co-operation between Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras should be encouraged, but warned against the use of Bumiputeras as "fronts".

To ensure the success of the National Development Policy, which was to strike an econom-

ic balance among the races, the people of all races had to co-operate.

Those with better capabilities, he said, should share their knowledge and experience with others who were still lacking and weak, adding that "they will not lose by doing so".

He cited the case of the Chinese, known for their business acumen, to impart their knowl-

edge to others who were still new in the field.

"Using Bumiputeras just for image will be detrimental to non-Bumiputeras as they will be burdened with this practice forever," he said when opening the MCA general assembly.

Worse still, Dr Mahathir said, the practice would lead to those unable to use the Bumiputeras

as tools to fail.

"Nevertheless, sincere co-operation between the Bumiputeras and the non-Bumiputeras should be encouraged," he said, adding that co-operation included the transfer of skills and knowledge.

Allegations that the

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Sincerity reaps mutual benefits

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practice of taking Bumiputeras as partners is a form of corruption will have basis if it is done just to get influence.

"But it is not easy to determine when this practice becomes corruption and when it is not. If the duties of the Bumiputera partners are not restricted to using their influence, but contributing to success, the negative elements of this co-operation can be reduced."

He reminded them that "one will be enriching oneself when one helps enrich others".

Today, the market in Malaysia is only half of its potential and this is because the Bumiputeras' buying power has not reached the same level as that of non-Bumiputeras.

"If the Bumiputeras' buying power can be brought to the same level as that of the non-Bumiputeras, the domestic market will become bigger. With that, all business people will make more profit."

The Prime Minister said the Government still viewed with concern the low Bumiputera participation in the economy.

He said it still had to strive to strike an economic balance between the Bumiputeras and other races who had already succeeded and were far ahead.

"We should not view this matter lightly as it is one of the major factors which can

lessen racial tension in our country."

Although the racial tension has now declined, it can resurface if the imbalance is allowed to continue.

"And this tension will impede the achievements of all of us, Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera."

While the co-operation between the Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras should be encouraged, the Bumiputera partners should be given a meaningful role and "be forced to work hard".

"It is not their job just to meet with government officers," he said.

On MCA's strength, he said the results of the April general election were proof that contrary to claims by the opposition parties, especially the DAP, the MCA still had influence among the Chinese.

The results showed that the MCA also received big support from other races who were confident it could continue to protect their future.

He said the Chinese community had shown that they were not easily influenced by the propaganda of the opposition parties against the BN Government.

"The Chinese now have a wider outlook and are wiser at evaluating development. They look far ahead to the future and do not listen to or believe baseless allegations about the weaknesses of the BN Government."

Dr Mahathir said the opposition parties were bent on hurling all sorts of allegations against the Government.

"Things like injustice, corruption which is purportedly widespread, favouritism or having connections in businesses, the morals of leaders, oppression of the people, the fate of workers said to be left unprotected, the acquisition of land for development and the likes, are often turned into political issues.

"But these allegations are not accepted blindly by the Chinese community and voters of other races as the allegations have weak foundations and are deliberately made to get political support."

The people are already mature, can think and make assessments for themselves.

"They respect the laws of the country and allow the legal process to mete out justice to everyone."

Dr Mahathir said the Government did not victimise any party or protect anyone in upholding justice.

"The Government's actions are strictly based on the interests of the country and the people."

He said it was impossible that Malaysia could prosper and all Government-organised projects implemented well and fast if the Government was "entangled with corruption", was unfair and inefficient.

If such allegations were

true, he said, it would also be impossible for Malaysia to be selected as a model by world bodies and visited by many to learn its system of administration.

The people do not actually like to harp on petty matters which are often turned into political issues and capital by the opposition parties.

The people realise that the little problems they face can often be overcome promptly and amicably through the BN's elected representatives and government machinery which are becoming increasingly efficient and sensitive to their well-being.

Dr Mahathir said the people did not use other methods and channels which could only cause tension without achieving the desired goals.

"Confrontation with the Government or between the races or between employers and workers, as suggested by the opposition parties, will never result in success. Countries using this approach never progress and prosper."

The people's expectations of the BN Government after the general election are increasing and their aspirations for the future and for their generations and the country have also become greater and more critical.

Dr Mahathir reminded the BN component parties to be prepared to face pressures resulting from the

higher expectations of the people in whose hands rest the power of choosing the government.

"If we fail to measure up to their hopes, they may not vote BN in the future."

Dr Mahathir said BN's sincerity to bring peace, harmony, progress and unity to the people must be fulfilled "not only in words, but by deeds".

All BN racial-based component parties must struggle for all races and not only their own race because they received the support from all races during the election.

"Umno, in fact, gives attention to other races. BN racial-based parties must take this into consideration and strive for all races."

He admitted the fact that some of the BN policies or approaches could probably be wrong.

"We admit we are not perfect, not free of mistakes. But nobody can say the BN and the BN Government cannot develop our country."

He said neither locals nor the world could deny the achievements of Malaysia under the BN.

"Therefore, every component party and its members must strive to preserve and develop the BN."

"All parties should be patient as all efforts will take time before successes are achieved."

"But be convinced that the BN policies will benefit all races in Malaysia."