

22 MAY 1996

Students

DR MAHATHIR PROUD OF BUMIPUTERA ACHIEVEMENTS

WASHINGTON, May 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is very proud of the achievements of Bumiputera businessmen and their ability to manage industries and corporations which have brought profits amounting to billions of ringgit.

During a dialogue with Malaysian students here, he mentioned by way of example Malay industrialists such as Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, who owned a 30 per cent share, worth RM1.8 billion, in Malaysia Airlines (MAS) and another Malay industrialist who won the confidence of a Swiss bank which gave him a RM1.7 billion loan to acquire a 32 per cent stake in the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (Hicom).

"If in the past Chinese companies represented Malaysia in the Pacific Basin Economic Council meetings, now many prominent executives who represented Malaysia were Malays," he told about 200 Malaysian students from universities in Washington, Philadelphia, Connecticut and New York.

Apart from holding talks with President Bill Clinton, Dr Mahathir today delivered a thought-provoking speech on "Asian Values Debate" which was applauded by PBEC members who represented 1,200 companies from 19 economies in the world.

Malay executives who attended the PBEC meeting included Tan Sri Azman Hashim, Chairman of the Arab-Malaysian Merchant Bank; Tan Sri Shamsuddin Abdul Kadir, Executive Chairman of Sapura Holdings; Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli, Chairman of Malaysia Airlines and Technology Resources Industries Bhd and Tan Sri Halim Saad, Executive Chairman of Renong Bhd.

Dr Mahathir urged the students to study hard and if they were interested in venturing into the business field, God willing, they could control or manage banks or corporations which would bring billions of ringgit in profit.

He said many companies and banks which made billions of ringgit in profit were managed by Malays such as Maybank which made a profit of more than RM1 billion annually, Telekom Malaysia nearly RM2 billion and Sime Darby more than RM1 billion annually.

"Malays are capable -- will take time-- and I have confidence in their abilities," the Prime Minister said.

Successful Malay companies had also invested in countries such as Argentina, Chile, Czechoslovakia, China, Cambodia and Tanzania.

He also stressed to the students the importance of maintaining good relations among the various races and if the relations were not good, incidents such as the May 13 problem would occur and the country's rapid economic growth would be affected and the opportunity to study at home or overseas would be affected.

Replying to a question on Umno, he said the party did not belong to him only or to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim or Wanita head Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz but to all Malays.

If Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Rais Yatim wished to join Umno "We accept."

"I don't harbour hatred against anyone as people who condemned me in the past have now been accepted in Umno and are holding Cabinet posts," he added.

He said Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz could join Umno so that all Malays could unite under one party.

Dr Mahathir left for London tonight and is expected to hold talks with

British Prime Minister John Major.

He is expected to return home on May 24. -- BERNAMA

SH AAM