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Mahathir-Society

EXISTENCE OF THE POOR AND RICH DOES NOT MEAN INJUSTICE

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- The existence of the poor and the rich in a society does not mean injustice, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"Injustice occurs only if the rich are too rich and the poor are too poor to the point they cannot live decently," he said at Umno's 50th Anniversary Convention at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

"In democracy, usually the rich are taxed heavily to help the poor. Therefore imbalance in the society can be reduced," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, said the society normally thought that the poor could not be possibly wrong although it was clear that their actions were unjust and destructive to the public.

He said, for example, that if the poor encroached into government-owned land or land which belonged to the well-to-do, such action was defended by the society and deemed justified.

"Any action to remove them and to re-acquire the land is considered unfair. Even if compensations are paid and they still refuse to vacate the land, public sympathy for them still prevails".

"The champions of justice will protect the poor or those considered poor without taking into account whether such acts are fair or the otherwise," he said.

The view that the poor could also become unfair was not easily accepted, Dr Mahathir said.

He said the general public preferred to equate poverty with victimisation and wealth with oppression and deception.

"Justice can never be achieved as long as there is an assumption that the same offence by two different parties cannot be meted with the same punishment," he said. -- BERNAMA

AZZ ZUL JK