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Mahathir-Malays

DON'T BRAG ABOUT ECONOMIC SUCCESS, MAHATHIR TOLD MALAYS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the Malays and other Bumiputera groups not to brag about economic success achieved.

He said many more need to be done as the country is entering into the information technology era.

"We have the potential and capability to achieve success like any others who are willing to work hard," he said when opening a Bumiputera Economic Achievement Expo at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The exposition is organised by Wanita Umno in conjunction with the 50th anniversary celebrations of Umno.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said the government first realised the importance of equitable economic development among the various races after the 1969 racial riots.

"Though it saddened us because many people had died and injured, the fact is that it awoken us and caused us to strive to develop the Bumiputeras," he said.

Dr Mahathir, recounting the development of the country and the Bumiputeras before and after Independence, said the people at the time regarded Independence as the right to govern the country, not developed it or improve the Malays.

He said this only came later when Umno leaders at the time realised that Independence would be meaningless if the Malays were not at par or as progressive as other races in the world.

The Malays at the time did not place much hopes of succeeding and only relied only on their political power to enjoy certain priorities, he said.

"No much efforts were made to develop the Malays in economic field though there was progress in education," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia's success in putting the Malays and other Bumiputeras at par with other races economically had made it a model to other developing countries.

"They want to see how a backward country could develop and how the Malays could be at par with other races," he said.

He said many such attempts at correcting imbalance in society had failed such as through communism and socialism.

"The same applies to affirmative action concept to the make the blacks and whites equal," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir inspected a guard of honour mounted by 500 members of the Wanita Umno Brigade.

The expo enables investors, entrepreneurs and the public to witness the country's economic progress over the past 50 years in various fields through multimedia presentation. -- BERNAMA

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