

24 FEB 1997

Mahathir-Social

SOCIAL PROBLEM, NOT A MATTER TO BE POLITICISED, SAYS MAHATHIR

SEREMBAN, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government is prepared to cooperate with anyone including the opposition in addressing social problem besetting society.

He said social problem was not a matter to be politicised because it demanded the cooperation of everyone including the opposition to combat it.

Dr Mahathir said the Pas-led government in Kelantan should work together in finding ways to overcome the problem since it was more confined to the Malays and Kelantan too was faced with an even more serious situation.

"So, don't be boastful and arrogant, looking down on others as stupid," he said at a luncheon with political leaders and heads of government departments, here today.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad and State Executive Councillors.

He said the state government concerned was incapable of doing anything to overcome the social problem in the state, especially the AIDS disease and drug addiction.

"This problem exists in a state governed by a party which says it can resolve the problem," he said.

Dr Mahathir, in his speech, also touched on the question of the frequent change of governments in several developing countries, a move which would only create instability.

"Unless, the change is for the better," he said. He took as a case in point, Kelantan whose economic performance had deteriorated but there was nothing the federal government could do since the government was elected by the people.

"A frequent change of governments will not guarantee any success nor democracy," he said.

He said Malaysia recorded rapid economic growth because the people of various races and cultures were able to enjoy political stability.

The government had done everything to ensure continued prosperity and rapid economic growth, he said.

Dr Mahathir, in welcoming the move by two DAP assemblymen Lee Yuen Fong and Khoo Seng Hock to the join the MCA of the Barisan Nasional, did not dismiss the need for opposition parties.

He said government was not just politics but also development especially in ensuring increasing the incomes of the people.

The incomes of the workers in the country, especially in the industrial sector, had doubled compared to the past and they also enjoyed various facilities and incentives provided by their employers, he said.

"A peaceful country enables growth of the industrial sector, providing more jobs to the people to the extent that factories are rushing to find workers," he said.

This, he said, forced the factories to increase wages but it should not be too high.

"The government is even willing not to collect taxes from the factories to enable them to invest here and provide jobs to the people. There is no need to go on strike ... the salary will go up on its own."

Dr Mahathir also said the government could also relax regulations relating to the cultures of the various races in the country when the people lived in harmony.

But, it did not mean that they could ask for unreasonable thing like holding religious talks other than Islam over radio and television, he said.

"If this happens then what is the meaning of calling Malaysia as a country according Islam as the official religion. Naturally, we ask for special privilege to be accorded to Islam."

Dr Mahathir hoped that certain quarters would not be excessive in their demand to the extent of denying the privilege accorded to Islam in the country.

"Don't create an issue just to gain popularity," he said.

The Prime Minister also advised BN component parties not to be extreme but moderate in whatever requests they made. -- BERNAMA

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