

04 MAR 1997

Umno-bumiputera

UMNO WANTS MORE MIDDLE-CLASS BUMIPUTERAS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- The Umno supreme council wants the state governments to create more middle-class bumiputeras because their number is still small.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed said tonight the effort could be made through business opportunities as well as training in the field of management and franchise trading.

"Where we have created job opportunities for all lower-class Malaysians including the bumiputeras, we have also been successful in creating the upper-class bumiputera entrepreneurs," he told reporters after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

"However, the number of the so-called middle-class bumiputeras is still behind that of the other communities," he said.

He cited the case where not many middle-class bumiputeras could afford to buy houses priced between RM50,000 and RM300,000 even though they were given a five per cent discount.

Dr Mahathir said there should be more middle-class bumiputera entrepreneurs because it was difficult to increase the income by merely getting salaries.

On the federal government's efforts towards this end, Dr Mahathir said the issue had been brought to the attention of the Cabinet.

"The cabinet has agreed that we should focus on creating more middle-class bumiputeras and the forms of action recommended to the respective state governments have been accepted by the federal government," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was no definite figure for the number of middle-class bumiputeras to be created as long as there were more of them compared to the existing number.

"This is necessary so that when there is medium-cost housing, there are bumiputeras who can afford to purchase the units," he said. -- BERNAMA

AZZ ZUL JK