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A clarion call for patience and unity

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IPOH, Sun. - Malaysia's economy will come out unscathed under the present Barisan Nasional leadership of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, if the people remain patient and united.

"We should rest assured that Dr Mahathir and his Cabinet is on top of things and the situation is easing," said former Foreign Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie in a keynote address at a national seminar entitled "Government Austerity Audit: Its Scope and Role in Building a Strong and Vibrant Malaysia."

"The Government has many ideas. Let us be more united and wait with patience. We must pray that we come out of this economic crisis unscathed."

"This is the time for greater determination to stand together and not to weaken ourselves by (mutual) recriminations. Any upsetting of the apple cart would bring instability.

"Without stability, how can we face the present economic crisis, let alone fulfil our Vision 2020?"

Ghazali said a society which practises the free market system is always subject to problems.

"If we accept the theory, that a free market system is crisis-prone, then we should always be ready and never be complacent, firstly to avoid the crisis and if the crisis cannot be prevented, then we must be prepared with ideas and the people to manage it."

Ghazali said if Malaysia achieved its goal of being developed, it would stand to be an economic threat to developed nations, particularly if it became the role model for other developing nations.

"Malaysia, under the current leadership of Dr Mahathir, is being directed towards industrialisation based on communitarian ethical values," he said.

"WEism and not Iism should be the order of the day," he said. "The driving force of Malaysia's development programme is not desire or greed but need."

"In this respect, there should always be an `austerity audit.' Not only during hard times, economically-speaking. It should be legally-constituted."

He reminded the audience of 500 not to forget that Malaysia practised democracy with a Parliament whose members were duly and fairly elected by the people from time to time according to law.

"We, the people, have spoken. And if there was any grievance felt by a section of the people, for the moment, the redressal on remedial measures should only be through the mechanism of Parliament," he said.

"Any other way to bring about awareness such as pressure group action, demonstration, noisy revolution or using such words as `People Power,' would be unconstitutional and frowned upon by our people who are wholly-devoted to peace and stability."

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