

28 MAR 1998

Mahathir-sacrifice

SACRIFICE TO PRESERVE PROGRESS, SAYS MAHATHIR

JELI, March 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Malaysians of all levels, though economically beleaguered now, to make sacrifices to preserve the country's progress thus far.

Opening the Jeli Umno division delegates' meeting here, he said the people should appreciate that the government would need all their support in upholding the country's achievements and in revitalising the economy.

"We must realise that our freedom is being challenged. Unless we are disciplined and heed government instructions, we may not be able to preserve that freedom," he said.

Although the majority of Malaysians were united in this cause, he said, there was still a "minority who are opposed to the government's efforts to prevent the country from being re-colonised".

Despite repeated its explanations that the government had been able to bring about accelerated economic growth since independence, the minority group still rejected this reality, he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, urged party members to help the government in explaining to the masses measures being taken towards economic recovery and get them committed to implementing them.

He said making sacrifices was also Islamic in that it is line with the annual observance of the Eid and the spirit of sacrifice could be put in practice by upholding national interests at times of economic setbacks.

"We'll have a brighter future if we're willing to sacrifice," said Dr Mahathir who is also Kelantan Umno liaison committee chairman.

In this context, Malaysia's position as an Islamic nation that had transformed itself from one relying on agricultural and mineral commodities to an industrialised country had to be maintained, he said.

The prime minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali was present at the function which was attended by more than 10,000 people.

Jeli Umno division chief and Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa and Senate President and former Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Yaacob were also present.

Dr Mahathir later also opened the Bukit Nangka Umno complex, the venue of the meeting, while Dr Siti Hasmah inaugurated a badminton court housed in the complex.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said there were already positive indications of Umno members increasingly rejecting graft going by the number of party members lodging reports of them being offered bribes.

On whether Umno was willing to work with PAS, which is ruling Kelantan now, Dr Mahathir said: "We are prepared to cooperate but they should not insist that we should follow them." -- BERNAMA

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