

06 DEC 1998  
Mahathir-Better  
STRIVE TO BE BETTER, SAYS PM

LANGKAWI, Dec 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the people should strive further to defend the nation's integrity and independence by avoiding dependence on foreigners.

He said that Malaysians should try to be better so that instead of depending on others, Malaysians would be depended on by them.

Simultaneously launching the Farmers Management Institute and opening the 25th annual general meeting of the National Farmers Association (Nafas) here, he said that Malaysia may be better than some other countries but Malaysians must realise that there were others who were better than them.

"We should not be complacent as many others are better than us and if we do not strive to be better, they will dominate us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that they now wish to colonise the country again and this time through the economy, by impoverishing Malaysia so that the country would beg from them.

He said that they would then dictate terms, resulting in the nation and its people losing their pride.

"Today, they are trying to take over most of the companies belonging to Asians in countries which have to bow to the IMF (International Monetary Fund)," he said.

The Prime Minister, who is First Finance Minister, said that Malaysia did not do so and as such the country "is saved somewhat but our fate lies in our hands".

He also said that leaders should have certain capabilities to protect the nation.

"The government does not exist merely to ensure that elected representatives can hold the posts of minister, prime minister and others," he said.

"If they fail, they should not be elected again and if they are prepared to allow foreigners to determine the fate of the country, they also should not be elected," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that those who should be elected to rule the country were "those with ideas, who could protect the country and at the same time prosper the nation".

He said that those with positions were actually entrusted with the responsibility to protect and defend the country.

On the setting up of the institute, funded by the government with the cooperation of Nafas, he expressed confidence that the standard of farming would be continuously improved and farmers would help save the nation from being overly dependent on foreigners for food supply.

"If we do not have adequate supply, we will have to beg from others and as such lose our integrity and independence," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that during the current economic slowdown, farmers organisations, with a membership of some 600,000, should strive to diversify their cultivation to earn a better income.

They should make concerted efforts including utilising sophisticated technology to upgrade production to help the country reduce dependence on imported agricultural produce, he said.

After the opening ceremony, Dr Mahathir toured the six-storey complex costing RM11 million.

He later visited Taman Lagenda here where snake king Othman Ayeb is embarking on a record-breaking feat to stay with 150 poisonous snakes for

27 days from today,

Earlier, Dr Mahathir observe the progress of construction of a kelong costing RM3 million in Teluk Burau, here.

-- BERNAMA

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