

16 NOV 1999

Mahathir-Compromise

DR M DISPELS NOTION UMNO HAS GIVEN IN TOO MUCH TO NON-MALAYS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has rejected the notion that Umno has compromised too much all these while and had given in to the interests of non-Malays in the country.

"It's not true at all. We only honour the promise and the understanding we had when we attained independence," he said in a special interview with TV3 tonight. Transcript of the interview was released to Bernama by the Prime Minister's Office.

The people must accept the reality that Malays and non-Malays lived in Malaysia, said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman.

"If we want to evict the non-Malays, we know it cannot be done. So, we accept them as the people of this country. As citizens, they must be treated as such," he said.

Umno has been the governing Barisan Nasional's (BN) pillar since the coalition was established 25 years ago. BN is now gearing up for the 10th general election on Nov 29.

Dr Mahathir said the non-Malays recognised the position of the Malays and did not question the status of Islam as the official religion provided they were free to embrace the religion of their choice.

He said they also did not reject Bahasa Melayu as the national language and there were non-Malays who were more fluent in the language than Malays themselves.

"This has made over country very peaceful. If we take 100 per cent for ourselves, resulting in no peace in the country, then we cannot develop the country. We can get 100 per cent but what is there in the 100 per cent.

"To me, it's better to get 50 per cent from something that exists rather than getting 100 per cent from out of nothing," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if in the past the Malays only planted padi, now there were successful entrepreneurs and businessmen among them and some of them have been chosen by multinational companies as directors and managers.

"We achieved that because our country is peaceful. The alternative is we fight among ourselves, destroy our own country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he usually explained to the non-Malays that in a multi-racial country like Malaysia, there would not be a race that would get 100 per cent of its requests and demands.

"The Malays are dissatisfied, the Chinese are dissatisfied, the Indians are also dissatisfied. To me, this is the best situation.

"In a multi-racial country, if one race is found to be very satisfied, this means the other races did not get their share," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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