

# PM: Outsiders out to sabotage recovery

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OUTSIDERS frustrated by their failure to take over Malaysian companies and banks during the recent crisis they themselves created, will now try to sabotage Bumiputera economic recovery, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

The Prime Minister said they will label any recovery effort as a bail-out, which shows their desire to see all Bumiputera companies fail.

"They want to derail the New Economic Policy (NEP) because they see it blocking their opportunity to control our economy," Dr Mahathir said when launching the Malaysian Unit Trust Week organised by Permodalan Nasional Bhd and the Federation of Malaysian Unit Trust Managers in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said these outsiders will deny these allegations, but the fact is that wherever they have sparked off economic crisis and weakened countries, they have been able to buy banks and industries at very low prices.

"The International Monetary Fund has forced the 100 per cent opening of crisis-hit economies as a condition for them to secure loans. While they criticise us for what they call government bail-outs, they have no qualms about bailing out their own companies," Dr Mahathir added.

He said by merging their giant companies, these foreigners were preparing themselves to crush local companies and banks the moment they can enter domestic markets through globalisation.

"At the same time, mod-

ern trading through dotcom companies will render most of the local companies obsolete, because these dotcom companies have the ability to sell directly to buyers in our country," Dr Mahathir said.

He said this will not only cause the Government to lose revenue from imports and corporate taxes, but also lead to loss of job opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said whether or not the interpretation of globalisation can be changed will depend on the unity between developing countries, which has not yet happened.

"Therefore, we must strengthen our economy. The NEP must be implemented wisely so that no one feels they are not get-

ting their share. In this aspect, PNB and its unit trusts can play an important role," the Prime Minister said.

He said the NEP is not limited to equitable ownership of shares and the involvement of Bumiputeras as low-income private sector employees.

"It is not even limited to the establishment of a Bumiputera middle-class and professionals, but also developing owners and managers of companies that are as good as those owned by non-Bumiputeras," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the Government wants to see a balance between Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras at all levels, including those at the very highest, who are

rich and own large businesses and industries.

"We should not allow ourselves to be misled into thinking that we should hate those who succeed at the high level because they are rich, and that they are cronies of certain people," Dr Mahathir added.

He said while institutions like PNB help ensure that stock market equity held by Bumiputeras is maintained at a certain level, their managers' involvement in a company's operations is limited to only becoming a board member.

"This does not give them the opportunity to learn the ins and outs of business and management, which is important to create a knowledgeable and skilled group of businessmen and man-

agers," Dr Mahathir said.

He said this is why in some cases, certain individuals who have proven their capabilities are given a number of shares so that they have control over the companies and their operations.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped that one day economic distribution to Bumiputeras would not depend on unit trusts, a way of distributing the country's wealth to a large number of the people.

"With determination, hard work, and self-confidence, the attainment of this objective could materialise in a short period of time. Actually, it is most humiliating when we need to be provided protection in our own country," he said.