

We do not practise favouritism, says PM

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'Govt helps those with weaknesses and in need of special support'

JOHOR BARU, Sat: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government does not practise favouritism to a certain race while abandoning others.

He said if the government seem to project an inclination towards helping or giving special attention to a certain race, this is because they have weaknesses and need the extra support.

"This does not imply that the government is practising favouritism and abandons the need of other races or deprives them from assistance," he said in his opening speech at the 55th MIC Annual General Assembly at the Eden Garden hotel here today.

He said the government wants to help all races so that society will be able to reap the fruits of the country's development and prosperity.

The government does not want to see Malaysians being torn apart or divided according to their social and economic status, he said.

Mahathir stressed it is important that every race understands it is vital to sustain the country's peace and progressiveness for the future.

"The New Economic Policy, the 8th Malaysia Plan, the Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) and the country's development policy have been implemented to rectify any irregularities in the country's social and economy

development," he said.

He added that while the new economic and country development policies give certain emphasis to help the social and economic status of bumiputras in the country, the OPP3 and the 8th Malaysia Plan gives the Indian community and the other races a bigger share of the cake.

Mahathir said under these two policies, the government has particularly outlined that the Indian community be given special preferences for opportunities in the country's social and economic development.

He hoped that the Indian community welcomes the government policies positive-

ly to improve themselves and achieve greater heights in the country.

"Like the Malay and Chinese communities, there are also Indians living in the urban and outskirt areas who are still left behind by the country's development," he said.

He also said the government, through the MIC, has always been concerned of their needs and have provided assistance to the Indian community although it is a minority race.

Mahathir urged Malaysians to continue to uphold racial unity and harmony and not be easily incited by certain people out to destroy the nation.