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Dr M: Evaluate claims correctly

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on the people to make correct evaluations of allegations hurled against the Government which he said were mostly baseless.

For instance, he said, the Muda Irrigation Scheme was said to "torture" the soil, the Penang Bridge was a waste and the New Economic Policy only helped the Government's cronies.

The Umno president said there were also allegations that the Proton car project would fail, privatisation did not help develop the nation, capital controls could not possibly help revive the economy and many other allegations, all of which were unfounded.

"Likewise, the allegations that Dr Mahathir ignored the voice of the grassroots, does not believe in religion and uses the services of bomohs (mediums), and does not perform the Subuh (pre-dawn) prayers are all slander," he said at the opening of the Umno general assembly at Putra World Trade Centre.

He challenged the Opposition, particularly Pas, to prove these allegations and also those about other projects and Government policies.

"Didn't the NEP provide higher education opportunities to thousands of Malay children, including those of Pas members, such that today their pay is many times more or double that of their parents'?"

"Isn't Proton a success such that three quarters of the cars on the road are Proton cars, and those who earlier could not afford a car are now driving a Proton?"

"Did the world not acknowledge that today Malaysia's capital controls have succeeded in reviving the Malaysian economy?"

Dr Mahathir said Pas was responsible in preventing Malay children from pursuing knowledge which started right from kindergarten.

"At this stage, innocent children are taught to hate Umno so that they will be life supporters of Pas.

"To Pas, knowledge is not important. Religion too is not important. What is important is victory in the general election," he said.

Pas, he said, in its obsession to win votes, had also forgotten the true objective of its political struggle so much so that the Malay rights had become the subject for bargain.

Today, he said, 72 of the Malay representatives are from the Government and 32 from the Opposition. If just another 21 seats are won by Opposition parties, they would have 53 and Umno 51.

"To get 21 seats is no longer that difficult. In areas where Umno won by only a small majority, 200 to 300 votes from other races will mean a win for the Opposition."

Dr Mahathir said as such, to ignore Malay rights merely to get non-Malay support was certainly wise. "But, in order to rule, it is necessary to have at least 97 seats. As such, buying and selling and bargaining must be continued. What is there to sell if not the Malay rights?"

Dr Mahathir said the Government that would be created with specific parties would continue to be weak as it was possible for anybody to topple it.

He pointed out that if any of the coalition parties withdrew, the PAS-led coalition would collapse.

"Can a weak Government such as this rule firmly? Can a weak Government such as this protect the Malays who are still weak? Together we should

ponder this," the Prime Minister said.
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