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Mahathir-Information

MAHATHIR WANTS INFORMATION MINISTRY TO CORRECT WRONG PERCEPTION

KUALA LUMPUR, April 5 (Bergambar) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the Information Ministry to play a role in giving the correct interpretation of government policies to clear any confusion among the people.

He said this role was very important, especially when there were parties misinterpreting a policy to the extent that it could create an undesirable situation in the country.

Speaking to Information Ministry staff during his visit to Angkasapuri, here, Dr Mahathir cited the example of the misinterpretation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) by certain parties which gave the impression that it only benefited a small section of the people.

"If we make an interpretation based solely on two, three people who are seen to have benefited greatly from the New Economic Policy and ignore all the efforts made for so many bumiputeras, then the NEP appears to be unfair and needs to be stopped," he said.

However, if the NEP was stopped, many bumiputeras would not receive education, scholarships, licences, permits, opportunities, financial assistance and 1001 other opportunities created by the NEP, he said.

The example clearly showed that if a person did not know how to interpret a government policy, a good thing could become bad and a bad thing, good if viewed from all angles.

"The Information Ministry has a responsibility to give a correct interpretation and picture of what is happening in our country.

"The world has acknowledged Malaysia as one of the most progressive developing countries, it's impossible that we could have built our nation so rapidly if we had concentrated only on two, three people who received so many perks for themselves," he said.

The prime minister said he wanted the information and explanation given to the people to be balanced, that is, touching on the success of a policy as well as the problems faced.

"If we succeed in showing the people all aspects of our nation in an equitable manner, giving attention to the problems as well as successes, balancing the two, the people will get a correct perception of what is happening in our country and the results of our country's administration.

"I really hope that the Information Ministry will play an important role so that we can reduce the confusion among the people now because there are parties who deliberately highlight the bad aspects of our country without drawing attention to other aspects that are so good," he said.

If these people were allowed to monopolise explanation on what was happening in country to the people, it would not only confuse them but would also rouse their anger, he said.

"Not only will they be confused but they will also be angry with the government, the other races and certain people and with this anger, our country will not be peaceful," he said.

Dr Mahathir also wanted the information given to cover all the races in the country so that they could see what was actually happening to their own race as well as the other races.

In this country, he said, all races received the same treatment in a balanced manner. For example, while Islam was the official religion, the other religions could be practised by the other races.

The same applied to the Malay language, which was the official

language, but there was no obstruction to the other races to learn and use their mother tongues, he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir had a closed-door briefing with senior ministry officials.

Asked about the briefing, he said he asked the information officers to be more professional when explaining government policies to the people by giving accurate background on the matter.

Otherwise, there would be wrong perception and ultimately the government's credibility would be affected, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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