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Mahathir-BN (Development)

M'SIA AMONG MOST DEVELOPED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, July 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has emerged as among the most developed developing country in the world as a result of continued development brought about by the Barisan Nasional (BN) government since independence, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, said such progress could be attained as the BN government since the Alliance era had been giving top priority to nation-building and the people's well-being.

He said the seeds for the prosperity being enjoyed now were sown by former Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj.

"Fortunately, at the time we fought for independence, we had a good leader with a big heart and liked to work with all the races, he said in his keynote address at the BN Convention at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Dr Mahathir said the BN's concept was to share the country's wealth, taking into account the status of the various races in Malaysia.

He said when Malaysia achieved independence, the country was far behind in all aspects with the people living in abject poverty as there was no job opportunities and insufficient food.

"We inherited a very poor Malaysia from the colonialists just like the other poor countries at that time. There was poverty, no schools, universities or roads as were found in the developed countries then," he said.

Dr Mahathir said at that time only 10 to 15 Malaysian students could afford to go for further studies abroad, a situation very much different from now.

He said people of diverse ethnic groups lived segregated from one another with no communication and friendship among them.

Nevertheless, as a result of the BN Government's efforts, the per capita income which was about US\$300 at the time of independence had soared to US\$4,000 now, he said.

Dr Mahathir said when Malaysia just obtained independence, many people thought the government could only rule but cannot develop the country.

"But nobody ever dreamt that we will one day own a national car, our company will be listed among the 500 top companies in the Fortune (magazine), our goods distributed worldwide and become world-class products," he said.

Dr Mahathir said many leaders, who met him, were impressed with the BN's concept and asked how this big coalition of 13 parties could be managed so well to the extent that they tried to emulate the concept in their countries.

He said BN succeeded because its concept was such that every component party was accorded equal recognition and treatment irrespective of their size in the BN supreme council.

-- BERNAMA

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