

NEP targets hampered by greed, says Mahathir

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SHAH ALAM: People who wanted to get rich quickly have hampered the targets of the New Economic Policy (NEP), said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

It would take some time now before equal distribution of the nation's wealth, as outlined in the NEP, could be achieved, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the original target of 20 years to meet the objectives of the NEP could not be met because certain bumiputras, who were provided government assistance, wanted to become rich quickly.

"We did not anticipate the lack of co-operation on the part of so many people who wanted to become rich quickly and that is why we have not been able to achieve

our targets.

"We give something to them and they sell it to others. We give them shares and they sell them to others," he told a press conference after opening the Selangor Barisan Nasional convention at the Selangor Youth and Cultural Complex yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, said the coalition had yet to function as a single party representing all communities.

This was because it involved the stand and principles of the 14 coalition members.

"We cannot rush into this sort of thing. The members are from various ethnic groups. If we force them to unite, it will not last and will eventually crumble," he added.

Addressing the state Barisan leaders and members at the convention, Dr Mahathir said previous leaders had tried to unite the various races under a single multiracial party such as the Independent Malaya Party and Parti Negara but failed to get support from the people.

"It failed because people were not ready for such a thing. They still want their own ethnic leaders to bring forward their problems and woes," the Prime Minister said.

However, Dr Mahathir was quick to add that in the long term, Barisan would have to operate as a single entity, adding that this could only be achieved when the various ethnic groups were ready for the transformation.