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Mahathir-NEP  
CONDEMNATION OF NEP UNFOUNDED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- The condemnation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) for allegedly not benefiting the Malays and other bumiputeras is unfounded and only following the lead of foreigners, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said that when the foreigners and their media started accusing the NEP of benefiting only the cronies of the government, the opposition Malays, without any examination, welcomed these accusations and condemned the policy.

They were prepared to see the Malays fail and suffer as long as they gained political mileage, the Umno president said in his policy speech at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

"Don't they know that these foreigners have another agenda and they do not like to see the Malays succeed, especially as we are able to defend our freedom and our culture?" he said.

He said that these Malays had completely ignored the opportunities and scholarships which had enabled hundreds of thousands of Malay children, who would never have obtained higher education, to study in various field of knowledge up to university level.

They did not see that all the vice-chancellors were Malay and so were most of the professors and lecturers, he said.

"They do not value the more than 40 funds established to help the Malay businessmen at all levels, the tens of thousands of contracts which were awarded to thousands of Malay contractors.

"They do not take into account the thousands of licences, approved permits, shares of companies which were allocated to thousands of Malays under the Industrial Coordination Act," he said.

The government also provided RM3 billion as capital for Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) to initiate unit trusts which had succeeded in making 7.28 million Malays shareholders in big corporations in Malaysia with investments totalling RM34.89 billion.

The shares allocated to PNB were the result of the restructuring or the establishment of new companies which were required by the NEP to provide 30 per cent of their equity to bumiputeras, he said.

"In truth, without the NEP, the unit trusts and the governmental institutions which were managed on behalf of the Malays, today, the NEP would have achieved only 2 per cent of the target.

"The reason is that when shares are sold to Malays. they immediately resell the shares to non-Malays. It was the same with the licences, APs and the contracts which are given to them," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays were not lacking in brains, ability, skills or strength.

"If they have not succeeded after being given the opportunities many times, after they have been helped with all kinds of facilities and even money, the reason is that (and here I must beg the pardon of the Malays) they are not hardworking, that is, they are lazy and like to find the easy and the quick way, no matter what the end results."

Because of their desire to get rich quickly, they sold the licences, the APs and the contracts for cash when given these facilities, he said.

"No work is done other than to be close to people with influence and authority in order to get something because they are Malays, bumiputeras. After selling and getting the cash they come back to ask for more.

"Truly, I feel ashamed to expose all these, especially in front of other people, in front of the whole nation and the world. But they all already know all this. I am not exposing anything that they don't know. I only mention what is already known."

Dr Mahathir said that only a few of the Malay businessmen, contractors and industrialists did not sell off the opportunities given them to get rich quick. These people worked hard and some of them succeeded.

Seeing that they did not cause the NEP to fail, the government gave more opportunities to them, until there eventually emerged a number who were successful in business.

Unfortunately, when this happened there was envy and jealousy and these successful businessmen were accused of being cronies of the government and government leaders, he said.

He said that if the government did not want to be accused of practising cronyism, it could let the Malays fail and go bankrupt.

Then there would not be successful Malays the government would be free of the accusation of practising cronyism but still it would not escape condemnation.

Seeing that those who became millionaires and billionaires were non-Malays while the Malays only became paid drivers of big cars owned by others and coolies hired by others, the condemnation of the government would be even more strident, he added.

"Actually, if the development of the Malay entrepreneurs and businessmen was not made the responsibility of the government, the development of the nation would be easier, higher and faster.

"What slowed down the national development was because the government had to try and try again to balance the economy of the Malays against that of the non-Malays at all levels and in all fields," he said.

The Umno president said that although the NEP had not succeeded fully, the disparity between the bumiputeras and the non-bumiputeras had been reduced.

While the towns had all the facilities found in developed countries, the rural areas had also been developed well.

"The average individual income or per capita income, which was only US\$300 when we attained independence, is US\$4,000 today with purchasing power parity of US\$10,000.

"There are still some poor people but the percentage has decreased from almost 50 per cent to only seven per cent," he said.

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