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NEP only effectively embraced by Malays for 15 years, says PM

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today acknowledged that the New Economic Policy, formulated after the 1969 racial riots, was only effectively embraced by Malays for about 15 years after its introduction.

Dr Mahathir said during that period, Malays were positively receptive to the policy and managed to upgrade their educational and economic standing, but this did not last.

"Initially, they were elated with the opportunities given to them, but later they considered all this a matter of course ... they are Malays, they are the definitive people of Malaysia so they must receive all this," he said.

He was speaking at the launch of the latest edition of the book *New Economic Policy: National Growth and the Economic Achievements of the Malays* co-authored by Dr Just Faaland, Professor Dr Jack Parkinson and Dr Rais Saniman at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir said he had reminded Malays of this repeatedly, including in his opening speech at the general assembly yesterday.

"I have been scolding them, saying all kinds of nasty things ... whether they appreciate it or not I don't know," he added.

He said though the NEP was replaced by the National Development Policy in 1990, the new policy maintained affirmative policies for Malays.

However, he reminded them that though the Government continued to assist them, they should respond positively for social restructuring and affirmative action to be more successful.

"I think we can do it ... but everyone must be serious about this," he told those present, adding that while the NDP did not reject affirmative action, the approach was more specifically qualitative and not merely quantitative.

Dr Mahathir said the book by Faaland, Parkinson and Rais would be useful for those interested in socio-economic studies and attempts to restructure and achieve an equitable society.

Also present was the book's publishing committee chairman and Ansara president Mukhriz Mahathir.

The book retails at RM40.

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