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Mahathir-Malays

THERE IS AN URGENCY FOR THE MALAYS TO CHANGE, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that there is an urgency for the Malays to adapt to changes as they can no longer afford to wait and let the world pass them by.

"We have no time. The world is now moving much faster, technology is now developing in such a rapid pace.

"If we're (like in) the olden days when certain changes take place in 10 or 100 years, then we'll be left behind. There is an urgency," said Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, at a media conference after briefing delegates to the Umno general assembly which begins on Thursday.

He was asked whether the decision to conduct examinations for science and mathematics in the English language from next year was made in haste as the Malays are not yet ready.

According to press reports today, the move will affect the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR), Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations.

Elaborating on the matter, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes, that's our target (examinations) and we can if we want to do it."

The prime minister said that any new policy or approach would certainly face problems initially.

"We must accept the fact that there will be problems and if we are not capable of overcoming these problems, then we are not fit to be leaders," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on his interview published by the weekly "Mingguan Malaysia" last Sunday in which, among others, he expressed his frustration over the attitude of the Malays who are bent on depending on assistance, subsidies and special rights.

"Those are not harsh words. Those are words of advice," he said.

Dr Mahathir's statement in the interview related to several government decisions seen as threatening the position of the Malays.

They include the opening up of the Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSMs) and the matriculation programme to the non-Malays, the teaching of science and mathematics in the English language and the implementation of the meritocracy system for the entry of students in public institutions of higher learning.

On the fear that more Malay privileges would be cut back, the prime minister said that it was up to them to make an assessment on whether what he was doing was something good for the community or otherwise.

Asked whether the opposition would capitalise on the matter, Dr Mahathir said that the opposition was indeed bankrupt of ideas.

"They'll just watch at what we're doing, they'll just condemn. Everything we do, they'll condemn but they never do anything.

"What they're doing, injustice for instance, that's what they're doing. They are consorting with those claiming to stand for justice (Keadilan) but they are not just. They intend to punish the victims," he said.

He was referring to the proposed Terengganu Syariah Criminal Enactment Bill which, among others, has been reported to be unfair to rape victims.

-- BERNAMA

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