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Mahathir-Corruption

MAHATHIR SAYS CORRUPTION "SLOWLY BREAKING TO THE SURFACE"

By Muin Abdul Majid

PUTRAJAYA, May 25 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today voiced out his concern about corruption in the country, including in political parties, by describing the scourge as "slowly emerging above the table".

The former Prime Minister did not mince his words when he said that political parties must not allow for corruption by being prepared to take action, even against the most prominent party officials.

"If you don't, any campaign to eliminate corruption will not be credible. So, where are we now? We are slowly breaking through the ceiling, we are slowly emerging above the table.

"When you reach that stage (where corruption is done openly)", there is no going back because everybody from top to bottom will be corrupt," he said at the question-and-answer session after delivering a lecture on the topic of social re-engineering at the Perdana Leadership Foundation, here.

Speaking to reporters later, he said that corrupt practices were on the way of becoming a culture now.

"Before, you don't have to bribe anybody to be elected. Now it seems that you must bribe before you get elected," he said.

Asked whether Umno was in danger of being engulfed in this problem, Dr Mahathir said: "Everybody talks about money politics. I hope it is not true but I am inclined to believe that the talk about money politics is true.

"Once it emerges above the table, you can't stop it because everybody will be involved."

Asked on calls for a review of the merit system in the admission of students into public universities, he said: "It is up to them (the government) to decide.

"But I thought (then) it was a good thing to shake them (the Malays) up a bit because they have become so complacent, thinking that (even) if you don't study, the government will take care of you," he said.

Earlier, in his lecture, Dr Mahathir said that once the Malays gained confidence to compete and win against the Chinese and Indians, the government could then probably get rid of affirmative action policies.

In this connection, he expressed the hope that other races would bear with affirmative action for some time yet.

"But I must urge the Malays not to abuse this privilege that the government gives them. They must work hard, study hard, they must pull themselves up and not lean on the government all the time," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if they did that, the Malays could one day proudly say that they were not the products of affirmative action.

He also spoke at length on the necessity to curtail the access to pornography on the Internet and the need to instill an abhorrence of drugs among the people.

-- BERNAMA

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