

24/05/2005

Mahathir-Race

MALAYS KEY TO FORMATION OF MALAYSIAN RACE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

IPOH, May 24 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the success of the Malays in all fields is the key to the formation of a Malaysian race among the multiracial people in the country.

He said that if the Malays were knowledgeable and economically successful and politically and socially strong and were not involved in corruption, the non-Malays would find it easier to accept the concept of a Malaysian race.

He said that although the process appeared difficult because of the diverse society in terms of religion, language and culture, it would be more acceptable to the Chinese, Indians and other races if they could see the success of the Malays in all fields.

He said this in the Premier Lecture, entitled "Formation of Race and Country" at Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) in Tronoh, near here.

Dr Mahathir cited the example of the United States where the success and wealth of the Anglo-Saxons had prompted immigrants from every corner of the world to accept English as the national language and themselves as Americans.

"We in Malaysia have yet to form a Malaysian race although we want to be one race. We are now a combination of races recognised as the people of Malaysia," he said.

To a question from a National Service trainee who wanted to know the reason for the poor response to the Vision School programme, Dr Mahathir said the concept was aimed at forming a Malaysian race but several factors posed obstacles.

"In the past, we changed the English schools which were open to all races to national schools to hasten the development of Bahasa Malaysia but the problem is that some people want to mix language with religion and want schools which are more Islamic although religion is taught as a subject," he said.

He said the emphasis on clothing and other things deemed Islamic gave the non-Muslims the impression that the national schools were for Muslims.

He said that this was a wrong approach because Muslims should nurture the true Islamic ideologies and noble values in their hearts and not focus on the form of Islam alone.

"That's why there are so many social problems in our society, child rapes, drug addiction and crimes involving the Malays. When I was prime minister I used to advise but Dr Mahathir was regarded as being un-Islamic, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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