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Bumis must change attitude, says Dr M

By Sharanjit Singh

MALACCA, Thurs. - Holding on to the New Economic Policy (NEP) for the next 1,000 years would be futile if Bumiputeras do not shed their get-rich-quick mentality, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

If there was no change in attitude, all talk of the survival of the Malays would be pointless, he said.

In his trademark forthright manner, Dr Mahathir said Bumiputeras only had themselves to blame for not taking advantage of opportunities under the NEP.

"Bumiputeras would be holding a 40 to 50 per cent share of the country's economy today if not for their get-rich-quick mentality. We gave them the opportunities but they did not capitalise on them.

"We set a target of 30 per cent equity for Bumiputeras but only achieved 20 per cent."

Dr Mahathir said the Malays could blame the Government or other communities for the predicament they were in, but finger-pointing was useless when they needed to look within to overcome their shortcomings.

On money politics, Dr Mahathir said Malays would lose their political power if the problem was not resolved.

Malay Rulers in the past, he said, literally invited foreigners to take over their States in return for a "political pension".

"They just gave away what was theirs in return for Rolls Royces and a handsome pension.

"Now we are facing a similar situation because of money politics," he said in reply to a question after delivering a speech at a function organised by the State Government and Institute of Management Malacca here last night.

Also present were Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Malacca Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Khalil Yaakob and his wife, Toh Puan Zurina Kassim, and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam. Some 1,000 people attended the talk at Dewan Seri Negeri.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said efficient management was essential in efforts to develop any country.

Citing China, India and Japan as examples, he said such countries were well on the way to becoming the next economic giants in the world.

He said locals should emulate their work culture and resilience.

He also launched a book entitled "Kenangan Indah" (Fond Memories) at the event.

The book, published by the State Government, features more than 300 pictures of Dr Mahathir's visits to Malacca while he was Prime Minister.

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