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Dana Harapan shows Government's commitment

THE Government's decision to set up "Dana Harapan" reflects its commitment to improve the economic well-being of the Bumiputera, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

Through the fund, a new investment company to manage a second National Unit Trust Fund would be set up to enable the Government to attract and mobilise Bumiputera savings and capital to achieve the 30 per cent target, he said.

"Previously, we failed to achieve the 30 per cent target due to several economic crises, including the Asian financial crisis between 1997 and 1998.

"We hope to achieve this target through the fund," he said about the Government's announcement that a new investment company Dana Harapan would be set up soon.

Jamaludin was commenting on the mid-term review of the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

Jamaludin said the Government was also determined to strengthen the financial system as evident from efforts to achieve a balanced budget in 2006.

He said Malaysia had transformed into a modern industrial nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Concerted poverty-eradication efforts were also carried out during his 22-year tenure, which resulted in low poverty level, he said.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy welcomed the higher allocation ceiling for his ministry, saying that more projects could be implemented.

"With the increased allocation, I'm confident that transportation infrastructure projects can be implemented within the stipulated period.

"In fact, more projects can be carried out in the next two years."

Chan said the proposed restructuring of the transportation system in the Klang Valley would provide a more orderly and efficient transportation network for the people.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu described the review as very good.

"Although it was Dr Mahathir's final presentation, it was a very good one and contained a lot of programmes and plans to modernise the country and provide the people with various facilities," he said.

Datuk Husni Hanadzlah (BN-Tambun) said under the Eighth Malaysia Plan there was tremendous economic growth and that the country had become the 17th biggest trading nation.

He said more efforts should be taken to train young entrepreneurs to look at various business opportunities on a global level.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the report showed that what was planned had been implemented.

Among others, the Government had succeeded in building 461,972 houses of the 615,000 units proposed to be built under the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

The report also showed that the people were enjoying the fruit of the plan, he said, especially the emphasis on boosting the socio-economic well-being, increasing per capita income and equity distribution.

However, Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), who was dissatisfied that Deputy Speaker Datuk Lim Si Cheng had given MPs only 20 minutes to speak, said corruption must be tackled.

He said young officers in the civil service must be trained not to accept bribes or abuse their powers.

His view was shared by Datuk Dr Hassan Mohd Ali (Pas-Parit Buntar), who detailed acts of corruption at various ministries.

He said Dr Mahathir did not even raise the issue in his speech on the review.