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Hadi: Dr M worked to improve lot of Malays

KUALA TERENGGANU, Sun. - Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang today said it cannot be denied that economic reforms had been made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to improve the Malays.

"Although I have criticised and disagreed with him on a few things, there are some reforms which Dr Mahathir has taken during his administration which were not done by past Umno leaders.

"One of his efforts was to provide places for the Malays in the economic sector. This, I do not deny," he said at his office.

He was commenting on Dr Mahathir's winding-up speech at the end of the Umno general assembly yesterday.

Hadi, who is Pas acting president, said Dr Mahathir had taken measures to improve the Malays economically as the community was still backward.

He said despite the various achievements by Dr Mahathir, the Prime Minister was still dissatisfied with some Umno members who had abused the economic opportunities given to them.

"There are certain quarters within Umno who have used the opportunities to build personal (wealth) and position. These are the shortcomings which Dr Mahathir is aware of.

"As the country's leader, he is stepping down with, apart from the successes, a few things which have not been resolved," he said.

Hadi said Pas supported the move to continue with economic reforms for the Malays but Dr Mahathir's successor needed to revise certain measures to ensure a more equitable economy.

He said there should not be a monopoly by Umno figures and suppression against other races in distributing opportunities.

In Rantau Panjang last night, Hadi said Pas was not surprised by Umno's attack on the party, adding that it showed Umno was worried about the people's support for Pas.

On Dr Mahathir's statement that Pas was not an Islamic party but a party which exploits Islam, he said Dr Mahathir was not an expert in the field.

On his expectations of the leadership of Abdullah, Hadi said Pas would continue to maintain ties with the new Prime Minister and hoped the democratic system would improve during Abdullah's administration.

Meanwhile, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said Dr Mahathir's closing speech which touched on Pas were old issues.