

Anti-bigotry bill hurts poor bumiputera, says Dr M
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The bills mooted by the National Unity Consultative Council, which aims to criminalise bigotry, will discriminate the bumiputera, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

Although meritocracy, which the three bills promote, is “very fair”, it will hurt the the race as it has the most poor people, Mahathir (left) said, because they will not have the same access to opportunities.

“It is highly likely that the poorest race who do not have the chance to study, or go to expensive private schools, or have enough to eat and are less healthy so they need to recuperate more often... will not fulfil the criteria, have no merit and will not get anything.

“They will not even be called for a job interview... so in meritocracy, the poor, that is the bumiputera, will continue to be poor and the rich will be richer,” Mahathir wrote in his blog.

He said removing race-based discrimination in policies will “eliminate the remnants of any move to balance out the economic stature between the races” as it will make the New Economic Policy illegal.

Instead of imposing meritocracy to eliminate discrimination, he said, Malaysia should learn from the European Industrial Revolution, where the oppressed gained rights through union action.

“When the workers organised, conducted strikes and other industrial action, their positions improved and they were able to gain knowledge, skills, wealth and success.

“Wow! It turns out that they were actually capable, these people who once had no merit now have a clear chance and are capable of becoming producers and employers themselves...

“So we have to learn from this, that even those with lesser merit can succeed if given a chance... Eliminating race-based discrimination will make us all equal citizens but will not give us equality,” he said.

'Just a fraction of what Yeoh got'

He also took a veiled jab on tycoon Francis Yeoh (below), who had to apologise for slamming cronyism in Malaysia, by saying that those who are capable are welcome to

compete in places where there is no such discrimination.

“Some are born rich that they are able to set up business in countries with no cronyism or are able to raise funds from Malaysia to invest in a country with no discrimination.

“If this terrible country gave him the chance to raise funds so he could invest overseas, then why is it wrong for this country to also give chances to those were less lucky to gain a fraction of what this person enjoyed?” he asked, without naming Yeoh.

The three bills which, among others, propose jail sentences and a fine for bigotry and outlaw discriminatory policies, were mooted by NUCC, which also includes Mahathir's daughter, social activist Marina Mahathir.

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