

Affirmative action can be removed if inter-racial wealth gap addressed - Dr

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that if the inter-racial wealth gap can be addressed, then it would be possible to get rid of affirmative action policies.

However, he said "greater corruption" had caused policies aimed at reducing the wealth gap to be unsuccessful.

"If you reduce the disparity, the jealousy, and the envy will be reduced. The country will be stable; then the country will grow.

"When the difference in terms of wealth is not so big, it is all right. We can do away with that (affirmative action)," Mahathir said, as reported by Singapore's Straits Times.

Affirmative action policies which favour the Malay bumiputera have expanded

since the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971.

Mahathir said that this policy was partly successful as there are more Malay professionals now.

However, bumiputera corporate equity was revealed to have fallen from 23.4 percent to 16.2 percent between the years 2011 and 2015.

Mahathir said this was because the bumiputera's "response was bad".

"Many of them failed because they sold the licences, contracts and permits. For a short while, they had money, but they didn't grow," he said.

The 95-year-old was also the architect behind the failed Wawasan 2020, which had espoused the reduction of inter-racial wealth gaps.

The Pakatan Harapan administration as led by Mahathir then launched the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 last year.

Mahathir had denied that his brainchild Wawasan 2020 had failed due to purported cronyism and nepotism during his first tenure as prime minister.

He had instead blamed "a tendency towards greater corruption" after he first resigned as prime minister in 2003.

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