

Vision 2020 target may not be achievable: Dr M
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The architect of Vision 2020 has come out to say that he believes the target he introduced in 1991, is not likely to be achieved within the next 10 years.



"Whether Vision 2020 is achievable, my fear is it is not achievable by 2020... maybe later," he said, reiterating an opinion he has frequently expressed in recent months.

However, Mahathir Mohamad (*left*) said, the target could still be achieved if the government changed tack and sought "new direction and different strategies", instead of continuing to depend on foreign direct investment.

"When we thought of it 30 years before 2020, we thought it would be a long enough time, so that who drafted it would no longer be around.

"I won't be around in 2020. I decided that now, so that any brickbats hurled would have to be done now," he said.

While Mahathir did not expressly say so, his view gave a nod of approval to the Economic Transformation Programme, which emphasises private sector-led growth, with about 70 percent of the investments sourced domestically.

But he was less than happy with the state of the Najib government, which he said was not strong enough to ensure stability.

'If you are strong, little midgets won't disturb'

"I hate to say this, but although the same party is in power, the strength is not the same as before.

"If you are strong, little midgets won't disturb you because they know what will happen to them," he said.

While the growth figures seemed commendable at 6 percent, Mahathir felt that the challenge was to make this felt to the people on the ground.

"Maybe you can have a lab on this," he said, giving a poke to the much trumpeted National Key Economic Areas labs.

If Vision 2020 as a whole could be achieved a little later, the objective of creating a Bangsa Malaysia (Malaysian race) - one of nine under Vision 2020 - might take an even longer time.

"It's a very tricky thing... to create Bangsa Malaysia would take longer," he said.

The veteran statesman added that he had believed a more prosperous Malaysia would mean people would "forget their racial differences" and that "talk of racial privileges will not pervade the political scene".

This, he had discovered when the business community, comforted by the currency fixtue in 1999 voted BN despite fears that "somebody's black eye being a tremendous issue".

Mahathir said that Malaysians today were still "arguing on a very racial basis", sarcastically adding that this included himself.

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