



**Expect to pay more if you want higher pay: Dr M  
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The people must be prepared to pay higher prices for goods and services if they want to enjoy higher incomes under the proposed New Economic Model, said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said that the cost of living would have to go up under high income economy as the government too would have to increase taxes and reduce subsidies.

"Without the cost of living going up, you cannot have higher income," he told reporters when asked to comment on the New Economic Model.

"For the government, it is the question of increasing taxes and reducing subsidies. Then the government will also have the money to pay their staff higher wages," he said after a signing ceremony between Petronas Lubricants International and Proton Holdings Bhd here, today.

Nevertheless, Mahathir said a higher income would also enable Malaysians to purchase more as the income increase would be greater than the increase in the prices of daily necessities.

He also said Malaysians should not complain of price hike in goods and services as the country had the lowest price for almost everything, compared with even the neighbouring countries.

"Even most of the oil producing countries sell their petroleum products at a higher price. So if the people want to have higher income, they must accept paying more for whatever they buy," he said.

Mahathir said the government was also studying foreign direct investments that could help generate higher income via industries with greater value-addition, adding that this was how high cost countries in the world could remain competitive despite expensive labour.

"We're not going to be as costly as some of these developed countries, but we will need to accept that we have to pay more in order to enable the producers to pay higher wages," he said.

**Unfair to criticise us over 'Allah' issue**

Meanwhile, Mahathir said it was unfair to cast a bad light on Malaysia over the controversy involving the use of the word 'Allah' by Christians as other countries too have been criticised for their stance on certain religious issues.

He cited Switzerland which does not allow minarets on mosques while France bars Muslim women from wearing the veil or 'tudung'.

"Therefore, no country's image is immune from criticism and Malaysia is no exception as evidenced by the bad press it is getting over the "Allah" issue," he said.

As such, he said, these countries would at one time or another be criticised as being

unreasonable and undemocratic which would leave a bad impression on them.

"I have a bad impression or perception of Switzerland, for example, which does not allow minarets, and of France which does not allow people to wear 'tudung'.

"My perception of these countries is that they are not being very democratic. This thing happens to every country," he said.

He also took the local media to task for not reporting that Malaysia was not the only "culprit" as other countries were being reasonable, restrictive and undemocratic as well.

- *Bernama*

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