

DR M: POOR MUST HELP THEMSELVES

NST- 3/12/2019
pg. 6

They must work hard or learn to be entrepreneurs, says PM

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POVERTY cannot be eradicated through monetary aid from the government alone, but also requires the people to help themselves at the same time, says Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said monetary aid would in the long run serve as a crutch for the poor, preventing them from improving themselves.

"We cannot overcome poverty by giving free money. So long as they receive monetary aid, the poor will remain poor," he told government officers at the Prime Minister's Department monthly

assembly yesterday.

He said the government, through the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, had underlined strategies to reduce the gap not just between the wealthy and the poor, but also among the races.

He said if the people worked hard and utilised government facilities such as loans and underwent entrepreneurial training, they could elevate their income.

He drew parallels with South Korea, which he said had overtaken Malaysia in terms of income growth.

"I have just returned from South Korea and saw how far advanced the country is now compared with Malaysia.

"Once upon a time, South Korea was behind us.

"They have learnt from Malaysia and now they have surpassed us with a per capita income of US\$36,000 compared to our US\$10,000.

"This has led me to wonder what is keeping Malaysia from attaining what South Korea and



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad addressing public servants at the monthly assembly in Putrajaya yesterday. With him is Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. PIC BY

AHMAD IRHAM MOHD NOOR

Japan had achieved," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged civil servants to engage the poor on the importance of working towards improving their livelihood by being receptive to the government's suggestions founded on the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030.

Poverty, he said, was the main

stumbling block of the country.

He said resources were available to them and with help from the government, the disadvantaged could improve themselves.

"The government will identify what initiatives the poor can adopt such as businesses or entrepreneurship programmes.

"If one effort fails, there are other methods they can explore."

Dr Mahathir said changing one's fate would require effort and the people must overcome their problems so that they could start improving their lives instead of waiting for government monetary aid.