

'Help the poor to improve their lives'

The Star - 3/12/2019 Pg. 2

Dr M calls on civil servants to get lower-income groups on board govt initiatives

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
mazwin@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Describing poverty as an obstacle to Malaysia's progress towards a developed nation, the Prime Minister wants civil servants to help tackle the issue by giving the poor advice and guidance on how to overcome it.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said civil servants should assist the poor by getting them on board the government's programmes and initiatives so that they could boost their income and improve their livelihood.

"If they can get out of poverty, then we can grow and take on more development. Perhaps then, we can be in the list of Asia's developed nations alongside Japan, South Korea and China," he told staff at the Prime Minister's Department's

monthly gathering here yesterday.

Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ismail Bakar.

Civil servants, said Dr Mahathir, could also do their part by advising the people not to solely depend on government aid and to instead work hard if they wanted to earn more.

"We cannot overcome poverty by giving the poor money. This will not make them rich. On the contrary, for as long as they receive aid, they will remain poor," he said.

While the government could provide help and guidance, Dr Mahathir said the key to getting out of poverty was hard work and effort, pointing to those who were successful and had become wealthy.

He cited cases of people who managed to overcome poverty and

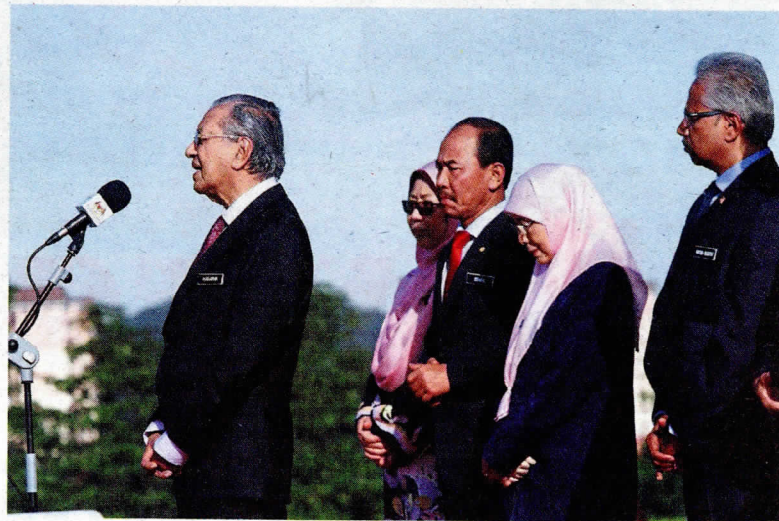
were now millionaires.

"Effort is the way to overcome poverty, not by the government giving out BR1M or other cash incentives," Dr Mahathir reiterated.

He said to assist the poor, the government planned to identify businesses and enterprises which they could take part in and provide them with capital or start-up funds to kick off their own business.

Malaysia, he added, could not enjoy the same development as Japan, South Korea and China as there was a wealth disparity among races.

"The Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 is an important policy because we will also be taking on efforts to narrow the gap between the rich and poor," he said, adding that the disparity needed to be addressed to allay dissatisfaction and unhappiness among the people.



Making a point: Dr Mahathir speaking during the Prime Minister's Department monthly gathering in Putrajaya. With him are (from second right) Dr Wan Azizah and Ismail.