

'New tax system will not burden the people'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government may introduce new forms of taxation to bolster its revenues but the people can be assured that they will not burden them, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Dr Mahathir said the taxation system imposed during the previous administration was unregulated and disorganised, which provided opportunities for irresponsible quarters to evade payments.

"There are people who evaded paying tax. Hence, the government will strengthen and streamline the mechanisms for tax collection.

"The government may introduce a new taxation system, but it will not burden the people," he said after launching the Pakatan Harapan government's Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (WKB 2030) road map here yesterday.

Apart from bridging wealth and income gaps among the people, WKB 2030 would also see the government strengthening its fiscal policies.

The efforts included the introduction of new initiatives to increase the income and improving tax regulations and compliance.

Dr Mahathir said every ministry would be tasked with ensuring that all targets and objectives outlined in the road map were achieved.

He asked the people to become the eyes and ears of the government to realise WKB 2030.

"We are also depending on people (to help the government achieve WKB 2030). However, do not engage in spreading fake news. If you find it hard to gain employment, please report to us and we will formulate an ami-

cable solution or take action."

Under the road map, Dr Mahathir said, the government wanted to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of nine groups.

They included people in the B40 category, the hardcore poor, communities vulnerable to economic transitions, the Orang Asli, Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak, people with different abilities, youth, women, children and senior citizens.

This was to ensure that people in these groups would continue to benefit from government development programmes.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir rebuked certain quarters for spreading fake news by accusing the government of neglecting Bumiputeras in the WKB 2030 road map.

"We understand that many Bumiputeras are lacking in many aspects."

For the past 27 years, Dr Mahathir said, the economic gap between Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras had continued to widen from three to four times.

According to the national corporate equity report in 2015, the Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera corporate equities had dropped to 16.2 per cent and 30.7 per cent, respectively, compared with in 2011. Foreign equity ownership, however, increased from 37.2 per cent in 2011 to 45.3 per cent in 2015.

"At the same time, as I always reiterated on numerous occasions, Bumiputeras should not wait for assistance and support from the government," said Dr Mahathir.

"When we understand that we are left behind, we must realise that we need to run faster to catch up with the people in front of us."