

**Government Agenda To Empower Bumiputera Economy Important To Correct Racial Disparity - Dr Mahathir**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- The government's agenda to empower the bumiputera economy is important to correct the disparity among the races, said former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"It is not a case of favouring the bumiputeras, but to provide them with their share. If they do not get anything, I feel it can give rise to anger and tension which is not good for our country.

"It is far better to make little sacrifices to correct imbalances within our society so that every race can have a share in all that is going on in this country," he said during a visit to MMC-Gamuda's Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit underground and tunnelling works in Cochrane, Cheras, here, Thursday.

Dr Mahathir said the critics had forgotten that in the past, resentment of the rich by the poor had resulted in people rebelling against the government and bringing new ideologies like socialism and communism.

"If the poor are now related to race, the potential for violence is much greater. We want to correct the disparity between the rich and poor and the disparity among the different races in this country," he said.

He said the correction of the disparity among the races would result in Malaysia being stable and would enable the country to achieve Vision 2020 and to become a developed country even earlier than predicted.

In September, the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment agenda was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir advised Umno delegates to elect capable leaders, saying this would be an important factor to determine the victory of the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election.

"I wish to remind everyone that the elections may be within Umno only but whether the selection (of leaders) was good or otherwise will be seen in the next general election.

"If you elect bad leaders, do not hope to win the 14th General Election," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a victory with a huge majority in the Umno elections would not guarantee the overall support of the people for a leader.

"Even if he or she were to win with a huge majority (in the Umno elections), he or she will not get the support (in the 14th General Election) if the people see him or her as incapable," he said.

The elections for the three Umno wings would be held on Saturday while the election for the Umno Supreme Council is scheduled for Oct 19.

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