

**Malaysia Will Be High Income Country By 2020 - Dr Mahathir  
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KATHMANDU, March 24 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia, currently a middle-income country, would be a high income nation by 2020, for which the Malaysian Government had laid out a comprehensive plan and was working out accordingly, to achieve the set goal.

Delivering an extempore speech in the Nepal Business Conclave 2014 on Sunday, Dr Mahathir set forth the vision for development which he adopted during his long tenure as Malaysia's prime minister.

"In fact, it is not me but the founding fathers of Malaysia who set the guidelines for the country's development, modernisation and industrialisation, which I simply followed," he said while speaking on the policies during the early days of Malaysia.

"When Malaysia gained its independence, 50 per cent of the people were in poverty and the founding fathers realised that the country must lift these people out of poverty for which they focused on stability, social harmony and sharing of political power and economic resources in an equitable manner," he said.

He added that this policy paid off and Malaysia could slowly emerge as a middle income country.

Stating that Malaysia was a multi-racial country, Dr Mahathir said its founding fathers focused more on harmony and co-existence among the different races, which created stability and social harmony.

"This was an important basis for industrialisation and development. Sharing of political power and economic resources among all people is yet another most important basis for development for any country in the world and Malaysia put this vision into practice, which not only empowered the people but also gave them the feeling of ownership in the development and decision-making process."

Dr Mahathir pointed out that the other important basis for the country's development and industrialisation was education, and Malaysia did its best to ensure that its people had every opportunity to be educated.

"We need to upgrade people's skill and knowledge for development, which we accomplished by ensuring free primary education, scholarship to secondary-level students and fund and incentives for building and establishing universities.

"In addition, we sent many Malaysian students to study abroad in various areas of science and technology so that they would return home with more skill and knowledge to help build infrastructure and innovate our economy and other sectors."

These schemes paid well and it helped to upgrade the people's living standard and modernise Malaysia's economy, noted Dr Mahathir.

When he cited that the most important factor for Malaysia's development was the determination and dedication of its leaders and people to translate their promises into action and practice, the audience applauded.

"Unlike in some other developing countries, our plans do not remain on paper but they are really implemented so that their goals and targets are achieved."

The important lesson Nepal could learn from Malaysia was the culture of coalition, said Dr Mahathir.

"In Malaysia, we build coalition before election and share power on the basis of election outcome. But Nepal has coalition only after election."

"Coalition before election is the real coalition forged with the determination and vision for a country's development. But the post-election coalition is just the coalition of convenience which generally does not work.

"Even now, we have the coalition government of 40 parties and the opposition has also formed a coalition. Coalition has become Malaysia's political culture which can be a lesson for other countries as well, including Nepal," he said in response to a question on what Nepal could learn from Malaysia's experiences.

He also said politicians, including himself, must not work for themselves but for the people, adding "that alone wins the hearts of the people and contributes to a country's prosperity."

Speaking on political system, he said that democracy was necessary for a country's well-being.

"But democracy should not be dictated and imposed by others, it should be the political system that can deliver to the people.

"Democracy needs constant reforms and improvement to make it better as democracy can never become perfect anywhere in the world," he said.

On Nepal, he said it was a beautiful country and had tremendous potential for development, adding that if these potentials were properly harnessed, it could be a prosperous country.

Noting that about half a million Nepalese were working in Malaysia, he said they had contributed to Malaysia's development and prosperity, and the Malaysian Government had duly recognised their labour and contribution.

Dr Mahathir is the keynote speaker at the Nepal Business Conclave 2014, which concludes today.

The Business Conclave was inaugurated by Nepal's Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, who also praised Dr Mahathir highly, for steering Malaysia into stability, prosperity and modernisation.

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