

Mahathir: Many don't admit to being Malaysian when abroad
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Former prime minister says slogans and words alone not enough for Malaysia to be respected by the world.

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says if the country is to have people with high cultural and moral values, there must be leadership by example as many still don't like admitting they are Malaysian when abroad.

Today, he said, Malaysians were hearing reports of senior civil servants having hundreds of millions of ringgit "which had obviously been acquired corruptly". Some Umno members, too, he alleged, had become corrupt.

It, therefore, seemed that values had deteriorated under the current administration, Dr Mahathir said in a blog post today.

"Morality and culture are going from bad to worse. Merely introducing a new slogan about Transformation in 33 years is not going to spin Malaysians around to possess high cultural and moral values."

He was commenting on Prime Minister Najib Razak's call on April 16 to Malaysians to equip themselves with high cultural and moral values.

Najib had said the government was committed to developing these values among Malaysians through its 2050 Transformation Plan (TN50).

"We want to be in the top 20, not only in terms of gross national income per capita, technology and infrastructure, but in cultural and moral values too," Najib had said.

Dr Mahathir asked, "How on earth does he expect that in 33 years time, through his 2050 Transformation slogan, Malaysians would possess high moral values and culture?"

The chairman of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia said it was "amusing" to read Najib urging Malaysians to have high cultural and moral values. It was "more amusing", he added, to read that Najib wanted the world to respect the nation, given the current situation in the country.

Malaysia, he said, was classified as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. "Do people respect a highly corrupt country?"

After mentioning the 1MDB scandal and its effect on the country's values, Dr Mahathir said, "Incidentally there seems to have been no audit of 1MDB money over the last two years. Is this something which will make the world respect us?"

He added, "Actually, Najib's call to Malaysians to achieve high moral values and culture and for the world to respect Malaysia is ludicrous.

"Currently Malaysia's name is mud to the world. Malaysians are ashamed to admit they are Malaysians when abroad."

This, Dr Mahathir said, was the "reputation" Malaysia had achieved due to the 1MDB scandal.

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