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Govt urged to **tweak** NEP

➤ Twelfth Malaysia Plan should discard race-based focus for inclusivity under Shared Prosperity Vision: Ex-Treasury sec-gen

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PETALING JAYA: A former high-ranking civil servant has called on the government to shift the focus of the 12th Malaysia Plan due to be launched later this year from the race-based New Economic Policy (NEP) to the Shared Prosperity Vision, where all Malaysians will receive economic justice, irrespective of race or religion.

Former secretary-general of the Treasury Tan Sri Mohd Sheriff Kassim said he is on the same wavelength with former CIMB Bank executive chairman Datuk Seri Nazir Razak, who said recently that the NEP had outlived its purpose.

"Our policy is in need of restructuring as

recommended in the New Economic Model Report that was presented to the National Economic Action Council in 2015."

He said it was wrong to say that after 50 years of NEP, the Malays still need to be "spoon-fed", adding that the new generation of Malay youths are no longer dependent on the proverbial silver spoon.

Mohd Sheriff, who is also a co-founder of G25, a pressure group of ex-senior civil servants, said many Malays including university graduates are joining the gig economy instead of applying for civil service jobs like they used to.

"Many of the Malay boys and girls are so adept with the internet and information technology that they quit their office jobs to start their own business online," he said.

Citing an example, Mohd Sheriff said a young Malay woman with an international accounting firm quit her job and is now baking cakes as a business from the comfort of her apartment.

Another woman wants to open her own consulting and advisory service after being fed up with working fulltime in an office.

"The government can discard the NEP as it is no longer needed because the new Malays can now stand without using crutches. They can look after themselves."

Mohd Sheriff pointed out that the government's job was to provide political leadership and practise good governance to promote confidence for Malaysia's future.

What is also needed is good physical and human infrastructure provided by the government as well as a policy that rewards merit and performance, thus resulting in the expansion of the economy through private sector initiatives, he added.

Such an ecosystem would create new opportunities for jobseekers, housewives, single mothers and physically handicapped people to find ways of earning a living.

"Some will fail but many will succeed because in an expanding economy, those who work hard will find success. And those who can use technology will become dextrous in changing from job to job until they find the right one that suits their lifestyle," he said.

Mohd Sheriff also urged Malaysians to support the management of the new special purpose vehicle called Digital Nasional Berhad so that with access to 5G technology, even the rural population will have a wider choice of earning income.

"Economic research shows that when a family has more than one income earner, the combined household income will save it from poverty," he added.