

Inferiority complex must be removed: PM

EST 22 AUG 1983

By AHMAD A. TALIB

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said no major programmes could be implemented if Malaysia was to rely exclusively on its own resources from the outset. Local content could be increased only in stages.

Hence, said the Prime Minister, the situation was no more unfavourable today than at any other time for the country to embark on the implementation of heavy industries. He allayed fears that there might not be sufficient expertise and manpower to carry out these programmes.

Dr Mahathir added that the inferiority complex which still afflicted some Malays must be overcome immediately as it held back progress and development.

He gave this reminder yesterday in his winding up speech at the annual general assembly of Umno in Kuala Lumpur.

The Umno president told delegates: "We must be guided by the Chinese proverb which says that a journey of a 1,000 miles must begin with the first step. Once we start to believe in ourselves and in our collective abilities, and remove the inferiority complex, we can certainly do whatever we want to do.

"There is no other better time to initiate these projects than now. In the past, some people doubted the wisdom of setting up our own universities, saying that there might not be enough Malay students to attend them. That is why I firmly believe that the projects to be undertaken by the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (Hicom) should proceed."

Dr Mahathir, responding to points raised by delegates at the three-day assembly, argued that the nation must not

remain static if it desired continued progress and

Dr Mahathir said his remarks were made because there were rumours that he could not work with his deputy, and vice versa. There were also people who claimed that they were not on speaking terms, and that they had wide differences over certain issues.

He explained that this was not true, and therefore had to clarify that the team spirit was intact. He agreed that many people could have been confused by his statement, but insisted that his remarks were aimed at highlighting the excellent team spirit that presently existed within the party and in government.

Nevertheless, he welcomed the spate of criticisms levelled at him during the debate on the presidential address. He added that the assembly was a forum that enabled delegates to air their views on all matters concerning Umno and government.

development. All preparations were being made to undertake these projects, including the acquisition of the required technical know-how and skilled manpower.

He urged delegates, and the people in general, to always strive for improvement, and set high goals for themselves and the nation. In this context, he expressed deep "shock and disappointment" of the fear shown by the younger generation against challenges that would come with heavy industries.

Captivating the packed audience with his wit and cogent but simple reasoning, Dr Mahathir countered most of the points raised by delegates in an effective and frank manner. For about 75 minutes, the Prime Minister kept the audience rooted to their seats as he explained the views contained in his opening address to the assembly last Friday.

In that address, Dr Mahathir gave his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, an unequivocal vote of confidence. The statement was seen as underscoring the Prime Minister's concern over continuing rivalry in Umno following the unprecedented contest during the 1981 party election. Some delegates feared that Dr Mahathir was taking sides in anticipation of a contest for the post of party deputy president next year.

"The day when Umno members fail to respond to provocations by their leaders, then I fear that the party will collapse. On that day, we can simply write off the party.

"Let me tell you that I am not important. What is important is Umno, its stability as well as its strength. I'm prepared to be discarded if I'm not doing my job. On that basis, I'm prepared to fight all the way if there are attempts to bring the party down," Dr Mahathir told delegates who greeted the declaration with thunderous applause.