

Dr M: Umno entering dangerous, new era

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UMNO is entering a dangerous new era where self-interest is taking precedence over the interest of the party, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"With more Malays becoming rich, the contests for posts are carried out with the use of large amounts of money,

"Once more I would like to warn -- the use of money and the struggle for power will destroy Umno and weaken the Malaya" the party president added in his policy speech at the 35th Umno General Assembly this morning.

"If this happens, one day only the millionaires will lead Umno. And at

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campaign purposes and Government power is also used to garner support," the Prime Minister continued in what was his most forceful address to the assembly since taking over the reins of the party.

"When Umno is destroyed the victories of leaders become meaningless," he said and, in the same breath, added, "however, Umno will not lose unless Umno defeats itself."

The party leader also lashed out at some quarters for indulging in what he described as vote-buying.

"If we sell our vote to

choose to portray Islam as an intolerant religion which forbids Muslims from associating with non-Muslims and prevents them from even visiting their non-Muslim friends during festivals. "So extreme are their interpretations that some officers are even reluctant to touch papers on which the word 'pig' is written

"Islamic values, according to them, are those which separate the Muslims from the non-Muslims."

However, he said, despite these deviations the Government would continue to ensure that Islamic Values were absorbed into the administration, as it would result in a just and effective Government.

dertaken is the establishment of the Amanah Saham Nasional. Though the ASN we can control 30 per cent of the national economy."

He also took to task some quarters which had termed the ASN as being "unIslamic" saying, "If we have to wait until the emergence of an Islamic economic system before we try to achieve the objectives of the NEP we may even have to wait for 100, 200 or more years."

Dr Mahathir reminded the Muslims that during the times of emergencies Islam permitted many things otherwise forbidden. And to achieve the targets of the NEP before 1990 can be considered an emergency.

The Prime Minister

that time, Umno will no longer be a political party. It will be a rich man's club."

Reminiscent of Winston Churchill's Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party, the Prime Minister said a situation when money ruled should not be allowed to arise because the masses would no longer support Umno.

Vote buying

He pointed out that what gave birth and strength to Umno was the spirit and not money.

"At the time when Umno was made up of poor people it was successful even in defeating the British."

In an emotional address to a hushed audience, Dr Mahathir said: "Today fights occur at branch meetings till the police have to be called in."

"Those interested in becoming leaders use money to achieve their aims. Names of certain people are used to gain influence and accusations are blatantly thrown at each other. Wealthy Malays and non-Malays are called upon to contribute to ensure the victory of certain candidates."

"Dinners are held for

day, one day we will sell our party and, possibly, even our country" he cautioned.

"Do not allow the history of the Malay States to be repeated through our party," was his call to the more than 1,230 delegates.

Dr Mahathir also spoke against the building up of personality cults as this would only result in the party remaining stagnant.

"I appeal to Umno members to love Umno and not certain people within it, including me."

In his 90-minute address before an audience which included former Prime Ministers Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Hussein Onn, Barisan Nasional leaders and observers, Dr Mahathir dwelt on a wide range of subjects -- from national unity and Islamisation to the New Economic Policy, the privatisation concept and the constitutional amendments.

On Islamic values, the Prime Minister explained that this did not mean the form and culture of the Arabs but such universal values as trust, discipline, loyalty, honesty, tolerance and other time-honoured virtues not easily practised or portrayed.

"Unfortunately, some

'Strategies

On the economy, the Prime Minister said Malaysia had not been spared by the global inflation and called on the people to accept this reality.

He impressed upon them the need to be thrifty and patient.

The Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan had been announced and new strategies had been formulated to combat inflation.

However, a consolation was that Malaysia fared better in weathering inflation than most developed and developing nations.

Dr Mahathir also told the assembly that his Government was leaving no stone unturned in ensuring the success of the New Economic Policy.

"Among the efforts un-

also appealed to the non-Malays to help fulfil the objectives of the NEP.

"While Umno gives its co-operation and help to the other races, likewise they must also help to ensure the success of the NEP, other Government policies and actions aimed at reducing the economic imbalance between the Bumiputeras and the non-Bumiputeras."

Referring to the constitutional amendments, Dr Mahathir said it should no longer be a matter for debate as "it is already history."

"We have decided that only the rakyat has the right to make effective laws for the rakyat."