

Mahathir tells the Malays:

'ENSURE VICTORY'

JOHORE BARU, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Malays still need strong political power and influence in the government to further improve their level of development.

The Prime Minister said as long as the level of achievement of the Malays had not reached the stage which could guarantee their future success and well-being, they should continue to ensure victory in the political arena.

He told a gathering at Istana Besar here to mark the formation of Umno 43 years ago that Malay politics was not aimed at securing positions for anyone but to uphold the position of the Malays whom he described as being still weak.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the position of the Malays was so much better now that some had even forgotten the

reasons behind this.

"But if there is no Umno and if the ruling party has only 40 Malay elected representatives, with the rest coming from other communities, as advocated by the group of former Umno members, there will be no more protection (for the Malays).

"Then we will return to the situation when the British ruled or a situation worse than that," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke for almost an hour, said that because of Umno, Malays were able to safeguard their position and improve their capabilities to compete successfully, he said.

"Umno has succeeded in turning the Malays into a race highly sophisticated in the field of politics. Umno has brought the Malays into a single and effective political force with integrity and one to be reckoned with."

Such was the effectiveness of Umno's struggle that today, not only every Malay, but also every

Malaysian citizen, directly or indirectly benefited from it, he said.

Dr Mahathir said all these successes were the result of the spirit of tradition and customs which brought the Malays and their organisations to a congress on March 1, 1946.

He said those who believed in unity and who longed for it could not reject Umno, for without Umno unity would be meaningless.

"Does it mean that by merging splinter groups with minority Malay groups to oppose the majority of the Malays, the objectives of the struggle will be achieved?" he asked, and said that those who aspired towards unity should join the majority.

If unity was to be

achieved, each should follow the same policies, otherwise there would be no unity but merely a pact, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the spirit of unity and tradition and Malay etiquette had succeeded in moulding a strong political party in a race which almost had no experience in politics, even more in party politics and democracy.

He said the tradition and custom of not challenging the party leadership had made the party strong, even though members might not agree 100 per cent to everything done by the leader.

Recalling the history of the party, Dr Mahathir said that in 1984, the incumbent deputy president was challenged and all advice not to go against tradition and Umno and Malay custom went unheeded.

Without naming the leader in question, Dr Mahathir said the spirit of Umno had vanished from the heart of the challenger.

**Mahathir:
Practice
of no
contest
made us
strong**

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He said the challenger had isolated himself from Umno and was not motivated by the Umno spirit but self-interest which prompted him to do anything, including the destruction of the party.

Dr Mahathir said the challenger also tried to win the presidency in 1987 by putting forward various excuses such as the economic recession which, according to him, was caused by government inefficiency.

But these were all excuses as what was uppermost and important to him was to win the party presidency and become Prime Minister, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in the past, party leaders served with sincerity and were given full support.

There was no contest for the posts of president, deputy president or vice-president and if there was one, it was because of vacancies caused by deaths or other reasons, he said.

If not, all vice-presidents, deputy president and president were returned unopposed, he said.

He said this arrangement strengthened the party and enhanced the credibility of its leaders for only with such integrity could their views be respected by the members.

Some would feel that this was undemocratic but not contesting and reappointment also occurred in a democracy, he said.

He said the tradition and custom in Umno of not running after positions would enable the party to be strong.

"No one in the party rejects the views of the leader. The powers entrusted to the leader are respected by all."

Dr Mahathir said Umno had its own machinery to resolve problems without outside interference.

He said if a problem could not be resolved by the supreme council, it could be referred to the general assembly.

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