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Mahathir-speech

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opening address at the Umno general assembly today served as a message to open the eyes of the people towards developing a more progressive and respected nation.

With fervour, the Prime Minister said: +The Malays can be equally successful as the other races in this country. And this country, with its multi-racial society, can become a developed country like developed countries in the West and East.+

He reminded the people to stop idolising the West and picking up their habits and values since the Western society was now more prone to failure compared with the East.

+Many in Malaysia are now followers (Pak Turut). When will they realise that the West might be wrong and we, who are not the West, might be right,+ he said in his speech which lasted about 90 minutes.

The speech was frequently interrupted with applause from the 3,000-strong audience, which included heads of Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties and representatives of resident foreign missions here. -- more

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The Umno President also lashed out at the Chinese press for supporting the two-party system of government and he pointed out that this system, now adopted by the West, was encountering problems.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia adopted democracy because the system was the best but it did not mean that unfettered freedom or one that was unsuitable for the people could not be rejected.

Touching on economic progress and development, he said the people should adopt positive values and work culture and rid themselves of the habit of long debates on the pros and cons of any programme or approach.

+The Malays must have self-confidence. They are talented but this talent has to be tapped. The characteristics which can turn them into a successful race in all fields should be promoted, accepted and nurtured. God willing, we will be successful,+ he said.

He said the Malays should not be arrogant to the extent that they were unwilling to get rid themselves of values and an identity which was destructive. -- more

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Quoting the Malay proverb +Biar mati anak jangan mati adat+ (Let the child die but let not traditions die) he said it sounded good. +But, if the child is dead, who is going to carry on the traditions?+ he asked the assembly.

To Umno members, he said the party should be consolidated to give priority to its struggle to make Umno the backbone of the country's strength.

The Prime Minister reiterated his advice to workers that they should not seek wage increases through industrial action but through economic growth and increased productivity.

He also criticised a group of trade union leaders who abused their positions to serve their own political interests.

To the people of Kelantan and Sabah, who voted in an opposition government in the recent general election, the Prime Minister said the federal government respected their decision and accepted them as equal to the people from the other states.

However, he advised them to see how much they would get for their efforts by falling for the opposition's sweet promises. -- Bernama

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