

AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY YESTERDAY. Reports by CHUA YEW KAY, WONG CHUN WAI, WONG SAI WAN, ZULKIFLI TALIB, ROHAIZAD A. RAHIM and MARK KONG. Pictures by CHOW CHIN HUAT, ABDULLAH SUBIR, and ABDUL GHANI ISMAIL.

Fighting the rich with a **strong** **economy**

MALAYSIA has to strengthen its economic resilience in defending its independence against the economic threats of the developed nations, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Only by becoming a developed country could Malaysia stand up to trade barriers and other non-military threats launched against it, he said in his presidential address.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said the new philosophy of the big powers was that they had a right to interfere in the

affairs of another country if they felt that a country was not democratic, had neglected human rights, curtailed press freedom and polluted the environment.

He said that while Vision 2020 was to turn Malaysia into an advanced country in 30 years, having a growing per capita income was not the sole objective.

"An advanced nation means the capability to develop itself through knowledge, efficiency and high moral standards that will enable us to com-

pete with other developed nations in all areas," he said.

Dr Mahathir said a seven per cent annual growth rate or a two-fold increase every 10 years was necessary to achieve Vision 2020.

"This means that in 2020, our economy will be eight times the present size."

He said it was not an impossible task as the average growth in the 70s and 80s had been nearly seven per cent.

Dr Mahathir said the nation was ready in all other aspects:

- THERE was a strong and efficient political and administrative system;

- A FINANCIAL, banking, stock and capital market system was in place;

- A HIGHER level of capability in trade and industry;

- THE existence of the necessary infrastructure such as telecommunications, roads, airports, ports, oil and gas supply, water and electricity; and

- A LEVEL of education that was suited to the economic needs and which could be upgraded

and diversified.

Dr Mahathir said one factor that could jeopardise the realisation of Vision 2020 was whether the growth rate would be accompanied by a similar or higher growth rate in the bumiputra share.

But he said this would not happen unless the Malays realised how vital it was for them to fully commit themselves to raising their status.

Dr Mahathir spoke of attempts by some groups to frustrate Vision 2020. He said these groups wanted to undermine the

spirit of the Malays.

He urged Umno members to regard their task of moulding a 21st century Malay-bumiputra community as a cause or "jihad."

He said the Malays must take their rightful place in the modern world. To do this there was a need for a "new" Malay race, one with a culture that was in step with the times, willing to take up challenges, compete without help, educated and knowledgeable, sophisticated, honest, disciplined, trustworthy and efficient.