

Nation's stability allows it to be vocal in forums

MALAYSIA'S ability to be "vocal" at international forums is due to its stability based on a strong government, high economic growth and racial harmony among the three major races in the country.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia will continue to be vocal and remind developed countries on what it feels is right but it will not go overboard as "we have to know our limitations".

Winding up the debate at the end of Umno four-day assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, he said the people need to understand why the Government must be prudent in its management of the country as this is one way of strengthening the economy further.

"We would not like to succumb to the need to be popular. Look at what happened to governments which cater to all the needs of the people in order to remain popular.

"Many countries, like those in South America, for example, ended up as huge debtors to remain popular or to win the people's support. Once this happened, these countries could not even bark even when they were victimised by the developed countries," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the current government will continue to practise "pragmatic politics" and give the people according to what it could afford and not something beyond its means.

He said different races in the country will need to be pragmatic too, and to "give and take" to further enhance the racial harmony in the country.

"The 1969 racial riots can be the last in the country if we maintain this spirit of pragmatism and continue talking to each other. The Malays are not a greedy lot, they will only want to protect what is rightfully theirs. Let us continue with the formula of having multi-racial parties within a coalition," he said.

Despite having a solid background of a strong economy and unity, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir reminded Malaysians, especially the Malays, that this should not lead to them becoming "big headed".

He said the country and the party should know their limitations.

"We have to be sensible in what we can and cannot do. Look at the country which promised the world the "mother of 1 battles". In the end, they had to kneel down and kiss the feet of their conquerers," he said.