

PM: I prefer support to prais

By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised Umno members not to lavish praises on him, saying they should instead give such acknowledgement to the party and Government.

The Umno president and Prime Minister said he felt embarrassed and uneasy when praise was heaped on him by speakers who took part in the debate at the just-ended Umno general assembly.

"Truly all praises should be for God the Almighty," he said when winding up the three-day meeting at the Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said: "I wish to thank everyone for their contributions to the assembly, especially those who showered praises on me. But don't get me wrong if I tell you that I feel a little uneasy about being praised. I'm wary of praises."

"I feel that too much praise may not be good. They may affect one's decision-making capabilities. Furthermore, it would be difficult to know whether the praises are sincere or otherwise."

He told a Press conference later that if party members felt that he was entitled to the tribute, they should express it by supporting his projects and programmes.

Dr Mahathir related to the delegates the story of King Canute's sycophantic courtiers who showered him with praises and told him that he had extraordinary powers.

But the Danish king of England did not believe everything he was told. To prove to his courtiers that he was not all that powerful, he ordered them to place his throne by the sea.

When it was in place, he sat on it and ordered the sea not to wet the hem of his robes. However, it did not listen and his courtiers were shown the error of their ways in praising him for what he cannot do.

Unlike in the previous assemblies, only four supreme council members, including Dr Mahathir and his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, stood up to reply to the points raised during the three-day sitting.

Others were Johor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also the most senior vice-president, who responded on behalf of the Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers, and Datuk Abdul Hamid Othman, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Dr Mahathir said: "There is something better than praise. That's hard work. Working hard in support of Government's actions is always better. It is the high level of co-operation between government leaders and the people that has enabled many projects to be implemented, leading to the rapid development of the country."

"We all have weaknesses, but because we are mature and are willing to work with each other, we succeed. This is our way, and we will stay like this always."

"The maturity of Umno members has produced positive results. It is this maturity that will stop members from bringing down others."

In a light-hearted tone, he said his apprehension about being excessively praised was further heightened by the fact that the general election was approaching.

Appealing to the delegates to excuse him if his

words sounded harsh, Dr Mahathir said he meant well, but he feared that the praises would go to his head and affect his decision-making.

The party president paid tribute to the delegates, whom he said had clearly done research before delivering their speeches.

"Some had even anticipated correctly what I would be

saying in my opening speech. They had read my mind correctly," he quipped.

"That," said Dr Mahathir, "explained why there was more quality in their presentation."

He said he also noticed the inclusion of more Wanita speakers. "We need women's help and energy, if not in politics then in other

fields..." he said and was greeted with laughter.

Responding to points raised on social problems facing the country, especially the Bumiputera community, Dr Mahathir urged everyone to inculcate in themselves and the young the correct sense of morals and values.

He said "the wall of moral defence strongly embedded

in the hearts" would be the best protection against today's ills and problems.

Dr Mahathir added that one should not run away from problems, instead should confront them head-on.

He said the country must learn to manage success be-

PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE 2, COL 8

Call to support youth programme

□ FROM PAGE ONE

cause success brought with it many problems, adding it was better to have problems of success than problems of failure.

Another form of defence, said the Prime Minister was to keep faith in the *kita boleh* (we can) philosophy.

It would not only make Malaysians have confidence in themselves, but would help them to ward off negative influences like drug addiction, loitering, *boh-sia* and AIDS.

Dr Mahathir called on everyone to support the recently-launched *Rakan Muda* programme for the nation's youth.

He said the Government was also looking at new teaching methods that emphasised skills rather than theory, saying that children would learn more from actual practice than merely concentrating on theories and classroom lectures.