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Look back at Umno's struggle, youths urged

PENANG, Tues. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged the people, especially Malay youths, to look back at Umno's past struggle as this could help ensure continued prosperity and unity.

The Prime Minister said should they fail to learn the history of Umno and forget their past, they would "stray".

He said if today Malaysia did not bow to the International Monetary Fund, it was because the country had a strong Government, supported by the people and even by the Opposition at times.

"If there is no Umno, do not dream of getting such strong support," he said when opening the Menara Umno here.

Dr Mahathir said Umno had always won the people's hearts because its leaders had never "used" the party for bad purposes.

"We do not use our power to show off or be involved in unbecoming practices such as cronyism and nepotism," despite such accusations from outside the country.

He said Umno, together with Barisan Nasional component parties, had struggled relentlessly all this while and nobody in this country could claim that he or she had not got anything from the Barisan Nasional's struggle.

"We (the BN) will continue to be responsible and hope our struggle will bring more benefits (to the country and people).

"Today's (economic) problems can be overcome if all of us remain united and support the Government," he added.

Speaking on Umno's past struggle, Dr Mahathir impressed the crowd with an old pantun which read:

Pulau Pinang Negeri Baru,
Kepten Light Menjadi Raja,
Bila Terkenang Zaman Dahulu,
Turun Mengalir Air Mata
(Penang is a new State,
Captain Light its leader,
When recalling the past,
Tears flow).

He spoke of the time when the Malays, after being colonised for so long by the British, had lost their identity and had forgotten their own culture.

This, he said, was evident in the fact that unlike now when they performed the silat during ceremonies, they then performed the dragon dance during the silver jubilee of King George V.

"Not that the dragon dance is foreign to Malaysians, but at that time they did not know their culture as they had long been colonised," he said.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and other party leaders.

Later, at a Press conference, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would review bilateral relations with Singapore if the row over the shifting of the Tanjong Pagar Customs, Immigration and Quarantine checkpoint issue became serious.

However, he said, the situation was not serious at present and there was no need for such a review.

The Prime Minister was asked, after meeting the State Umno liaison committee, if the issue called for a review of relations between the two

countries.

Asked about moves in Singapore to discourage Singaporeans from travelling by rail, Dr Mahathir said it was their right to do so. "They want to give directives to their people, we can't say anything. So long as they don't tell our people what to do, that's all right."

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