

Shed ugly side of the new Malay: Mahathir

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Resist temptations, weed out money politics, says PM

Umno members must strive hard to renew the perception of the new Malay and get rid of their ugly side, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told more than 2,000 delegates.

The new breed of Malays should be able to resist temptations and be capable of overcoming the challenge of being rich urban dwellers.

The Malays, he said, have developed a new culture as a result of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which has brought about rapid progress leading to continued prosperity.

As the party responsible for increasing the number of new Malays, Umno must lead by example and start with its leaders and members becoming new Malays, before anyone else.

Mahathir said the party will only be qualified to spread the culture once Umno members succeed in overcoming their desires, discipline themselves and imbibe in the values and qualities needed to become new Malays.

"Among the most important values are discipline and self-control from negative behaviour, especially restraining our base desires," Mahathir said in his presidential address when opening the 54th general assembly at PWTC.

Explaining further, he said people who used to live in the villages, within their own values and traditions, have now migrated to towns, where life differed greatly, in droves.

"In the villages, the people were under the scrutiny of their parents, families and neighbours, holding strongly to traditions and culture.

"We safeguarded our honour and that of our village. We do not show off our capabilities and are not pompous and arrogant," he said.

However, increased earnings had turned the children of rubber tappers and padi planters into sophisticated urban dwellers with extra freedom, and their original values deteriorated.

"They appear unable to cope with prosperity and wealth. The large amount of money they have is not regarded as an investment but is spent carelessly, with no regard for the future.

"Money can buy anything . . . influence, popularity, power and for the urban Malays, thanks to the NEP, money is easily available," said Mahathir.

In noting the changes, he pondered whether the NEP should be discontinued in order to enable the Malays to be reunited.

Lamenting the negative perception of the Malays, the Umno president said there were those who portrayed the new Malays as drunkards, womanisers and gamblers and rationalised

that this was the devil's creation to ensure the failure of the Malays.

He said materialistic and greedy attitudes have replaced the Malaysian national spirit among most Malays today, where many still continued to pursue personal interests.

"Their participation in Umno is more often due to wanting to hold posts and enjoy certain benefits, with some wishing to gain wealth the easy way.

"As a result, they always struggle violently to become leaders in Umno at all levels from the divisional chiefs to party president," he said.

Urging them to root out money politics for good this time around, Mahathir reminded delegates that choosing a corrupt candidate was akin to being a traitor to the people, religion and country.

"Therefore, I appeal to delegates here to reject all candidates who bribed for

support of whatever post or used other means which could blacken the party's and race's image during campaigning.

"I also want to remind the delegates and candidates that membership in the supreme council does not guarantee a place in the government, even if they are already in the government," he said to a long and thunderous applause.

He said that refusing bribery for fear of the impact on the fate of the future generation shows self-discipline which, he stressed, was the only way to eradicate corrupt practices.

At the end of his 90-minute speech, Mahathir asked delegates to recite a prayer asking Allah for His blessings.

In his prayer, he asked Allah to protect Umno from its enemies, to bless the party's struggles and to give Umno victory in this world and the hereafter.