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Go back to basics, PM tells members

man; Eirmalasang Bani

UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on Umno members to go back to the basics and practise self-discipline to redeem the party in eyes of the people.

"Malays who desire continued progress, to build a brighter future; Malays who wish to redeem and maintain their dignity must be disciplined, must control their desires, and be willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the future of their race, religion and nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir, in his presidential address to the Umno General Assembly, said Umno's task is to bring back Malay unity and brotherhood so that the agenda of those who hate Muslims will fail.

Dr Mahathir said the splinter parties of Islam must be made to realise that they have been exploited by the enemies of Islam, and in its efforts to create this awareness among these splinter parties, Umno must uphold the truth.

He told delegates at the Umno General Assembly to explain and tell the real situation.

"This is easy as we are on the side of truth. Only those who do not uphold the truth will use all kinds of falsehoods, will cheat and lie.

"Only those who do not uphold the true teachings of Islam, will condemn other Muslims, will lie and abuse other people," he said.

He said Islam does not only enjoin its followers to be brothers but requires them to have other values that build character that is resilient and able to resist negative values that most of us have and to prepare ourselves to face the challenges of the 21st Century.

Dr Mahathir said among the most important values are discipline, self control from negative behaviour, especially restraining from base desires.

Dr Mahathir again warned delegates on the danger of money politics.

"When we refuse the bribe we get today, for fear of its impact on the fate of our future generations, this shows that we have self discipline.

"Only people who are disciplined are able to reject bribery for the sake of race, religion and nation. Without discipline, a race may not be able to maintain its independence."

Dr Mahathir also called on the Malays to believe in themselves and the efforts that they must undertake to achieve their dreams.

"Besides discipline, there are many other values propagated by Islam which must consciously be practised.

"While we claim that we uphold strongly to the teachings of Islam, many among us look for bomohs or witch doctors to attain success. Witch doctors cannot ensure our success.

"The work that we do, our kindness, our caring attitude, our good records -all these will ensure our success."

Dr Mahathir said the Government's efforts to balance the economic position of the various races through the New Economic Policy (NEP) have not been totally successful because the Bumiputeras themselves did not give the necessary cooperation.

In his presidential address when opening the 54th Umno general assembly, the Prime Minister said they were too choosy to the extent that most work areas had not seen Bumiputera participation.

Dr Mahathir said in the history of many civilisations, as soon as their citizens were reluctant to do work which involved hard labour, or were dangerous, and left their work to mercenary foreign workers, these nations

became powerless and the civilisations soon collapsed.

He said while people are now bored with the theme of his speech that Umno's struggle is not over, the truth was that the party needed to struggle even harder to achieve the goals of Umno and the Malays.

"We are facing even bigger challenges now. These challenges come not only from without but also from within - from other Malays, from within Umno even.

"If we are not vigilant there is the risk that we would not achieve our goals and even lose what we have now."

He said the Malays see the country's independence as a legacy of Umno members that precede the present generation.

"We are now grateful for this legacy, but will our ancestors be thankful to us if we let the race to become weak, without resilience, backward and downtrodden?"

Dr Mahathir said he was thankful for the mandate to lead the party again and to party members who accepted that the post of deputy president was not to be contested.

"If it was not because of past experience, we would have had these contests, but we were worried about the effects of people who will indulge in money politics, self-greed and an unwillingness to accept defeat," he added.

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