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Mental revolution needed to solve problems facing Malays

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has again expressed concern over the future of the Malays whom he regards as still lagging behind in many sectors.

Addressing a group of Malaysian students, professionals and business leaders at a luncheon in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, recently, Dr Mahathir said the performance of Malays in fields such as education and business were not up to the mark despite the economic recovery.

He blamed the Opposition for fostering the "culture of ingratitude" which he said had caused a serious split among the Malays.

It would be difficult to help them if they turned against the Government which had provided them with ample opportunities to achieve education and to prosper, he added.

Political analyst Kassim Ahmad said right-thinking Malays should reflect and ponder on all that Dr Mahathir has contributed to the community and the nation.

"Malays seem to be easily influenced by those who make use of religion for their own ends as they do not have a deep understanding of the Quran.

"They must understand that Pas has a political agenda and therefore what its leaders say cannot be accepted as the gospel truth," he said.

The Malays, he said, must change their mindset and philosophy of life if they want to match the progress achieved by the other communities.

"The Malays still regard the world as transitory and are therefore not that serious about achieving progress. They should not differentiate between the world and the hereafter in striving for excellence," he said.

The Malays, he said, will not go far if they are easily satisfied with lowly paid jobs. They should always strive to improve their standard of living and ensure a better future for their children.

As for Malays who were involved in anti-social activities such as dadah addiction, Kassim said this group seemed to be unable to cope with the present demands of society and therefore chose escapism.

He suggested that a "mental revolution" for Malays be launched immediately to overcome problems facing the community and to rectify negative attitudes.

Unlike the Revolusi Mental of the 1970s, he suggested that this time it should be an on-going process.

"It is just not enough to get a few academicians or intellectuals to come up with a few papers in a language which the masses would not understand."

Kassim suggested politicians and community leaders who have direct links to the people should also play a major role in carrying out the Revolusi Mental.

"Umno is well equipped to carry out the Revolusi Mental. However, those chosen for the task should be more committed," he said.

The objectives and content of the "revolution", he said, should be absorbed and fully understood by the people if it is to serve its purpose.

Kassim noted that while numerous forums, seminars, conferences and conventions were often held, Malaysians were notorious for not following up on resolutions and suggestions made.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said Dr Mahathir is totally different from what the Opposition has made him out to be.

"In the Middle East, they regard Dr Mahathir as a model to Islamic

countries and the Third World. Even the superpowers quietly admire him. They tried to belittle him but failed.

"As for the capital controls, even George Soros and the International Monetary Fund have admitted that he was right," Adnan said.

"If all Mentris Besar and Chief Ministers take good care of their States, there will be less problems for the Prime Minister and this will enable him to concentrate on nation building and taking the country to greater heights."

A better quality of life, he said, could be achieved if there were economic growth and job opportunities.

"To make this possible, we must have political stability and go back to the real village spirit of living together, helping each other and sharing hardship and difficulties," he said.

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