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Waking Umno from slumber

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MANY in Umno had, in the past, been quick at taking exception to unfavourable comments about the party. Never mind if the comments were deemed constructive by others.

This resulted in some people accusing the party of living in a state of denial. That accusation riled them even more.

The last thing they would want to hear is the fate of Umno being compared to that of the ruling parties in other countries that had lost the support of the people.

They seemed to think that what happened to such parties as Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and the Congress Party of India would not happen to Umno.

This tendency was so deep-rooted that many had refused to face the reality that Umno lost considerable Malay support in last year's general election.

Instead of accepting responsibility for the poor showing, they blamed others and one another.

But last week, the ground they stood on was shaken loose. They can no longer live in a state of perpetual denial. They must begin to face reality.

It was not a detractor or an enemy of Umno that shook them up from their make-believe world. It was the party president himself.

Speaking to the Press after briefing party members and delegates on May 9, a day ahead of the commencement of the party's annual general assembly, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad reminded them of the fate awaiting Umno if they continued to believe that it was invincible.

He urged them to learn from the defeat of the parties which had fought for independence of their countries, like the Kuomintang in Taiwan, the Muslim League in Pakistan and India's Congress Party.

"We need to learn from other people's experiences, (the downfall of) parties similar to Umno which had fought for their countries' independence.

"We learn (from their weaknesses) so that we will not suffer the same fate," he said.