

SUN, 22 JUN 2001

PM's speech good medicine for the Malays, says Rais

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opening speech contains the most effective advice for the Malay community, many leaders believe.

"The medicine given by him should be taken and fully consumed to ensure the survival of the Malay community in the future," Jelebu division head Datuk Dr Rais Yatim said after Mahathir, the party president, opened the Umno general assembly yesterday.

Rais said the speech not only reflects Mahathir's capability in continuing to lead, it also provides a fresh injection of ideas for Umno to be better in the battlefield of politics.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the speech is "a wake-up call for the Malays".

"He wants the Malays to quickly reunite. MCA will fully support that as Umno has been a very good partner in Barisan Nasional (BN)," he said.

Ling said MCA wants Umno to strengthen itself because "a strong Umno

will mean a strong BN".

MCA vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng said it was a very brave speech which raised very specific issues such as education and the economy.

"It shows that he's not looking for popularity, that he only wants the Malays to grow into a race that can be proud of itself.

"I fully support his views, which were expressed with courage. He always faces up to the issue and he gives hope to the Malay community," Chua said.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib said the president's speech was packed with advice, reminding the Malays to learn from past mistakes.

He reminded the Malays of the dangers of forgetting history and not staying focused in their struggle, Muhammad said.

"Many outside elements envy our success. At the same time, opposition parties do not realise that by asking for outside help, they are inviting the outsiders to topple us," he said.