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Mahathir-History

DR M TELLS MALAYS TO LEARN FROM HISTORY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the Malays to learn from history so as to avoid repeating mistakes which can cause them to lose power in their own land.

Citing the Melaka empire as an example, Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said Malays should avoid making mistakes of the past like lacking self-confidence and unity and seeking the help of foreign powers.

If the Malays were to lose power in their own country, they would become poor, live in Diaspora and be suppressed by others, he said.

"We need to learn from history because anyone who fails to learn from history will have to pay the price of repeating his mistakes.

"If we truly want to avoid falling into the old trap, we must avoid making mistakes of the past," he said at a ceremony to commemorate Umno's struggles and a meeting with Umno veterans at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Addressing more 2,500 people at Dewan Merdeka, Dr Mahathir devoted a good part of his speech to the subject of 450 years of colonisation of the Malays.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays could not simply subscribe to the slogan of "The Malays will not perish from the face of the earth" as advocated by Hang Tuah.

"If the Malays do not want to perish from this world, they should learn from history and avoid making mistakes of the past," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Melaka empire which was so huge at one time had fallen because its administration and military were not well organised.

Its collapse had caused the Malays to be continually colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and Japanese, he said.

He said the Malays had made a political blunder by agreeing to accept protection from foreign powers to the extent that they eventually lost power when all Malay states were colonised.

"We lost power in our own state because we always fought among ourselves and foreigners took advantage of the situation to subjugate us," he said.

In the economic field, the Malays were reluctant to do heavy work and this gave the British an opportunity to bring in Indians and Chinese to work in certain sectors, Dr Mahathir said.

"Because Malays were unwilling to work hard, foreigners (Chinese and Indians) came. If we had been willing to slog, there would have been no place for them (foreigners)," he said.

If not for the recession of the early 1930s following the fall in rubber price which forced foreigners to return to their homeland, they might have become the majority race in the country and denied the Malays their power, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays only realised their mistakes of the past when the British colonisers wanted to form Malayan Union, a proposal which would erode the rights of the Malays as natives of the land.

"If the British had not planned to form Malayan Union, I think the Malays would not have been united and made efforts to develop themselves," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there were signs that past mistakes might resurface because in Umno now there were people who placed self-interests above party interests by indulging in money politics.

"This will lead to the destruction of the Malays. All these are signs that we will be destroyed...that what happened 50 years ago will be repeated in the years to come," he said.

The prime minister said there were Malay parties like PAS which were willing to collaborate with other parties and compromise on matters touching on Malay rights and privileges just to gain support.

"This does not augur well for the future of the Malays, if we place party above unity. We may be colonised and lose our power...this is a big possibility," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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