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Dr M: Malays must do more

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SHAH ALAM, Sat. - In yet another reminder to the Malays, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the community faced the danger of becoming second class citizens in their own country when Malaysia achieved Vision 2020.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said the time had come for the Malays to ask what they could do for themselves, and not what assistance they could get from the Government.

"There is no point attaining Vision 2020 if the poorest community in the country then are the Malays. They must search for the answers to their failures and not look at the Government (for fault)," he said when opening the Selangor Umno 10th convention at a hotel here.

He also launched a Selangor Umno training centre named "Institut Latihan Budaya Melayu Baru".

Dr Mahathir said he noticed the main shortcoming among the Malays was their inability to address their own weaknesses, besides the practice of seeking government assistance. "so that their route ahead would be easier".

He spoke of the scores of resolutions adopted at various Bumiputera congresses submitted to the Government which failed to identify the real problems hindering the community's progress.

"We find the resolutions are always related to poverty, for example allocation for low-cost units, taxi permits, stalls, facilities in the villages... does it mean the Malays are only fit to demand low-cost houses?"

In short, Dr Mahathir said the Malays were poor because they wanted other people to do the work for them.

Citing the university admission quota as another example, Dr Mahathir said the right approach was not to demand quota increases.

"The admission standard for Bumiputera students has been lowered. If we lower it further, we will have those entering universities with poor results. If, let's say, one day they graduate as doctors, will we trust them to treat us?"

Dr Mahathir said the solution was to study hard and for parents to ensure that their children obtained good results so that they could compete with the other races on merit.

The party president said he believed higher education would help the Malays work their way out from poverty.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Umno members to continuously review their achievements in fulfilling the party's aims - the struggle for country, race and religion.

While Umno had succeeded in bringing progress to the country, the same could not be said in matters concerning the race and religion.

On religion, although the party had succeeded in the physical aspects like providing mosques, there was still much to be done in the struggle to unite the Muslims and inculcate the right teachings of Islam and values among them.

The task was made difficult by an Opposition party which used religion to divide the Muslims, spreading lies, labelling other Muslims as infidels and hurling accusations.

In the upliftment of the Malays, Dr Mahathir felt Umno could not be proud of its achievements because after 43 years of independence, the

community was still lagging in many areas.

On party unity, Dr Mahathir said Umno members could not afford to spend time bickering over the choice of its leaders as naturally, no one leader would be able to command 100 per cent support.

"If leaders are not given due support because certain quarters are unhappy, then forever we will be fighting about this, whereas the original objective of the party is not about leadership."

At a Press conference, he said he hoped the Malays would not become second class citizens, hence his repeated reminders for them to strive for the better.

On whether there had been any improvement despite the constant reminders, the Prime Minister said there had been some changes, albeit not that many.

"That's why I stressed the need for them to focus on what each one of them can do for themselves and not what the Government can do for them.

"Do not ask what the Government can do for you but ask what you can do for yourself."

On the submission of resolutions and demands to the Government by the Malays, Dr Mahathir said reasonable ones would be given attention.

"But do not expect us to place money in their pockets... this is difficult. One has to work to improve, although slowly."

To a suggestion that this "culture" was cultivated as the Government had accommodated many such demands, Dr Mahathir said:

"We have given in because this is a democratic party. If not, they will go to the Opposition."