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Mahathir-Malays

MALAYS TO REMAIN WEAK IF HISTORY FORGOTTEN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- The Malays, who are still weak and lagging in many fields, will see their lot deteriorate further if they failed to heed lessons in history, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said Malays had already forgotten about their struggles and "survival" to the extent that they were ready to squabble among themselves.

He said the Malays had forgotten or refused to understand the true meaning of independence as they believed that whoever formed the government would continue to protect them, just as what the Barisan Nasional government is doing all along.

"As a result, Malays today are still weak after 43 years of independence and in power in their own country. They will fail without government assistance in all areas," Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said in addressing the 55th Umno general assembly here today.

"Without positive discrimination by the government, only 20 percent of those entering universities would be Malays."

The Umno general assembly, at the Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre, is attended by 2,027 delegates.

Even then, he said, the Malay students will pass with low grades because of the Malay attitude of not giving high priority to the pursuit of knowledge.

Dr Mahathir said without government intervention in favour of the Malays, academia and government service would be led by non-Malays who would be in the majority.

He took to task Malays who did not value and who even ran down the good deeds done by Umno for the race, religion and country.

"Malays have forgotten. They forgot how they were once colonised and trodden upon because they were disunited. They have also forgotten of their strength and success, when united, in fighting the British and achieving independence," he said.

"And, in our obsession to obtain votes from certain quarters, there are those among us who were willing to bargain away the rights of the Malays."

He said what the Malays saw was that democratic politics provide an easy way out to obtain something for one's ownself on the premise that a little effort could bring substantial rewards.

Dr Mahathir said in the ruling party and other Malay parties, the main agenda appeared to be to squabble for positions while the ability to serve and contribute to the race and country was secondary.

"It is this squabbling which will bring down morality and we will begin to criticise even friends who have helped us and bring them down. Bribes will be offered, religion manipulated and the Malays disunited," he said.

"There is no gratitude expressed for good deeds. We topple, steal and resort to anything possible in chasing our dreams."

He said Umno's greatest success was uniting the Malays from the Malay states in the peninsula in the struggle for independence from the British.

He said this unity gave strength to the Malays who had never tasted it for 450 years.

Dr Mahathir said Malay Umno leaders have, all along, been able to foster a smart partnership among the various races in the country.

"There is no other multiracial country which has succeeded in overcoming the racial problem as in Malaysia under the Malay leadership of

Umno," he said.

"In the economic development of the country too, the administrative performance under the Malay Umno leadership has been much better than expected."

However, he said the achievements of the Malays could not be trumpeted as after only two generations, lessons from history have been forgotten or not understood.

On information technology (IT), he said the Malays must seriously strive to acquire it in order not to be left behind and one condition for it is to master the English language.

"Mastering English will not make us any less Malay or Islamic. The growth of the Malay language is not at the expense of rejecting other languages," he said.

"In this IT age, only those who master English will progress and succeed. The Japanese, French and Chinese even, admit this fact and are vigorously learning English."

Dr Mahathir called on the Malays not to miss out again on the information age revolution or they would regress and be looked down upon by others due to their narrow perspective on the Malay language.

-- BERNAMA

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