

27/06/2001

What's needed is shock treatment

Sadayan Riazzurrahman

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's diatribe against the Malays is nothing new. In all earnestness one would welcome the speech as an eye-opener. The Malay Dilemma did this a few decades ago.

It is in this sense that newspapers compared it to the book, conveying the hope of many that the party should reinvent itself to become a force to be reckoned with just as it did years ago when it sent the masterminds behind the Malayan Union reeling.

I am glad that Dr Mahathir has once again regained his touch in correcting the Malay mentality. I could clearly see the similarity of his early articles to the newspapers to what he is doing now.

Though almost all would admit that time is against him, I reckon that he is moving in the right direction.

His effort in cleaning his backyard (Umno) would not only send shock waves amongst corrupt politicians but also send a strong and clear message that Umno would not tolerate such superfluity and superficial members who are only bent on getting rich.

The expulsion of Umno members for practising "money politics" is also a sign of recovery that some people have taken note. For the masses however, these actions while justified, would not be enough for them to reinvigorate their souls for the sake of the party.

For some, as is being talked about in coffee shops, Umno is simply "irrelevant". What the public wanted to see is some big heads rolling.

Whether they are guilty or not is another story for them.

What the Malay community needs right now is shock treatment.

As Dr Mahathir points out, if a community without government assistance could become successful what is stopping the Malays, who are deluged with subsidies and other aid, from not reaching the same or even heightened status?

The logical answer is that they are spoon-fed too much and for far too long that it may have killed the edge a person should have in today's modern world. Thus, it is my humble belief that some cutbacks should be put in place for the benefit of the Malay race. I am sure political feasibility would not make it a full-fledged reality. However, if the Malay community could even feel a fraction of the real world, I am sure they would "wake up".

What Umno needs now is youth-oriented mature politicians who do not make it a priority to jostle for positions or to hog the limelight.

I urge Dr Mahathir to search for these miracle workers as Umno needs to address issues of the grassroots rather than just politicians who make it a point to visit their constituency (be it a town or a village) for some officiating ceremony or just for some talk.

What the Malay community now wants is the communal feeling that opposition parties are giving to them. Communal feeling here refers to politicians belonging to a certain area and understanding their common woes. It sort of develops that "lived in" feeling.

It is my sincerest wish that the Malay community reaches out half-way to meet Umno's struggle to re-innovate itself as well as its struggles to make itself "relevant".