

# I've failed to change Malay mindset: PM

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'I have tried to teach, scolded, cried and even prayed'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed regret over his failure to change the mindset of Malays, whom he slammed as complacent, incompetent and ungrateful.

Mahathir, who would have been 21 years as prime minister on June 28, said he had tried everything from pleading to praying, in trying to jolt the community from what he called a "culture" of extravagance and taking the easy way out.

"This is our culture. We

do not know what is hardship, we only want things to be easy," he said during an interview with *Mingguan Malaysia*.

The premier said despite the "disappointing" tendency to still depend on other's for their own development, he still had hope that the community would change their attitudes.

"What else (can I do) . . . I have tried to be an example, tried to teach, scolded, cried and even prayed.

"(But) I have failed. I have failed to achieve the most

important thing - how to change the Malays."

Malays and other indigenous groups make up 65 % of the population of 23 million, Chinese 26% and Indians 1%.

Mahathir, 76, said he is dissatisfied with the current position of Malays in the country, who despite receiving aid from the government, are still unable to compete with the Chinese.

"If we were to take from Kuala Lumpur, all that belongs to the Chinese including their homes and

buildings, what is there left (that belongs to the Malays)?" he said.

"The Chinese in Malaysia have no special rights, they experience discrimination. But they are more successful than us."

When asked if he would change anything if he could go back to 1981, when he first took position as president of Umno, Mahathir said he would have chosen not to be the party leader.

"I want to be a normal member Because I cannot do anything (for the Malays).