

# 'Malays are not safe'

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They are weak and will not survive if privileges are withdrawn, says Mahathir

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Malays are still weak and backward after three decades of preferential treatment because they are lazy, immoral and lack discipline.

He said even though they wield political power - he warned them of its impermanence - they are far from being safe and would not survive if their privileges are withdrawn.

"The Malays are still weak, the poorest people and are still backward," he said in his speech themed "Exposing the Exposed" when opening the Umno General Assembly at Putra World Trade Centre yesterday (*see Pages 2 & 4*).

Mahathir, who has been Umno president and prime minister for almost 21 years, said the Malays he was describing are in the minority but a big minority.

He apologised for being blunt and "exposing all these especially in front of other people, in front of the whole nation and the world" but as a leader he should have the right to say what is true and with good intention.

He was disappointed that he had failed to make the Malays successful and he apologised for his failure. He said he had tried his best but has failed.

"Today their (the Malays) national spirit has weakened and their ability to face challenges has been reduced ... when their rights and status are challenged openly, they are not capable of defending themselves."

Mahathir said Malays' political clout has diminished because they are not

united and warned "one day this power will disappear altogether".

"This is fine if the Malay individual has become strong ... but actually they are not prepared to face any competition at all. They are so afraid of other communities. Without the experience of competing with others, if the protection is suddenly withdrawn, they will not be able to survive."

The premier, reiterating what he sees as the evils of globalisation, said the emergence of powerful foreign corporations which can dictate national policies is worrying. "Our country, Malaysia, will surely be a target," he said.

"If today they (Malays) are colonised, there is no guarantee they will have the capacity to oppose the colonialists."

He said Malays have failed because they are lazy and seek the easy way out by reselling shares, licences and contracts to non-Malays.

"They cannot be patient, cannot wait a little. They want to be rich this very moment ... no work is done other than to be close to people with influence and authority in order to get something."

Mahathir paid tribute to the Chinese for their contributions to the nation's growth and urged Malays to pick up the culture of diligence, self-discipline and patience. "If we take out the Chinese and all that they have built and own, there will be no small or big towns in Malaysia, there will be no business and industry, there will be no funds for the subsidies, support and facilities for the Malays," he said.