

Mahathir: I did my very best for the Malays

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has apologised for failing the Malays.

The Umno president said that he had done his "very best" to change the Malays and the perception by others who regarded the Malays as a race that was looked down upon and colonised.

He said some people said there had been a "little success" towards this end but he had no right to assess his own achievements.

In his opening address at the Umno general assembly, Dr Mahathir said:

"I have tried as hard as I can. There were times when I was elated with what I thought was my success.

"But mostly I feel disappointed - disappointed because I achieved too little from my principal task, the task of making my race a successful race, a race that is respected, a race that is honourable, a race that is highly regarded.

"I beg your pardon because

I have failed."

Dr Mahathir said that he prayed there would emerge a leader among the Malays who would be capable of changing certain characteristics of the Malays and the bumiputras so that they would have a culture more compatible with success.

He stressed that Umno was certainly capable of changing the culture of the Malays.

He noted that the party had succeeded in uniting the Malays in the past.

Dr Mahathir added that it had removed the feeling of inferiority until the Malays became brave enough to rise and face the colonialists, to demand their rights.

"But, unfortunately, this small success has spoiled or undermined the thinking of the Malays until they believe they are already safe and can do anything."

He said that today, the national spirit had weakened and their ability to face challenges had been reduced.

"If today they are colonised,

there is no guarantee they will have the capacity to oppose the colonialists," he added.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that the political clout of the race had diminished owing to a split in their unity.

"They are not yet aware of this but today when their rights and status are challenged openly they are not capable of defending themselves," he said.

He noted that while the Malays sought refuge through political power, their break in ranks meant that their political power was eroded and not as strong as before.

"And one day this power will disappear altogether," he warned.

He urged the Malays to be alert and work hard so that their political power would be resuscitated and made permanent and also enhance their mastery of knowledge and skills in business and industry so that they could face and overcome all competition and challenges unassisted.