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`Malays are far from safe'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Complacency and over-dependence on the Government have rendered the Malays vulnerable to their own weaknesses and could lead to their eclipse in their own country, the Umno general assembly was warned today.

In his address to the party's 56th annual meeting, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Malays were far from safe and secure.

"Do not think that the power of the Malays in the political arena is permanent, that it will guarantee the safety of the Malays forever," he said.

"Be aware there is nothing permanent in human society, certainly nothing permanent in human politics," he said in his nearly two-hour address, entitled "Exposing the Exposed", to more than 2,000 delegates at the Merdeka Hall of the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The Prime Minister said the Malays needed to be more alert, disciplined and hardworking to defend themselves when their rights and status were openly challenged.

Dr Mahathir warned that if the Malays continued to find comfort in what small success they had achieved, without working harder to improve themselves, they would lose all that they had fought for since Independence.

He said that if they were colonised today, there was no guarantee they would have the capacity to oppose the colonists.

The national spirit of the Malays today, he observed, had been weakened and their ability to face challenges reduced.

"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.

Dr Mahathir said the Malays could no longer seek refuge in political power which had been eroded and not as strong as before.

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

He thrice reminded delegates that the Malays were not safe, and also thrice apologised for using harsh words in his speech but said he needed to do so because he loved his people.

The speech was available as a 58-page booklet and distributed to the delegates.

Dr Mahathir had written the speech in Bahasa Malaysia and translated it himself into English to ensure its meaning was as close as possible to the original text.

Dr Mahathir said if the Malays had ambitions to become a great race and a world power, they had to be hard-working and alert.

If so, not only would their political power be resuscitated and made permanent but their abilities in all fields and their mastery of knowledge and skills in business and industry would be enhanced. Dr Mahathir said for Malays to achieve all this, they had to return to the noble values of their culture and the teachings of Islam.

He said contrary to popular terminology, Malaysian Muslims were not "moderate" but "fundamental" Muslims, holding to the fundamental teachings of Islam as embodied in the Quran.

Dr Mahathir said these basic Islamic teachings would make the Malays a good and successful people.

Islam, he pointed out, teaches people to do good and to reject the bad. "But many of us Malays, who are all Muslims, follow their lusts and interpret Islam to render right the wrong things they do. And after that, we cannot understand why we fail."

Dr Mahathir said the Malays had no excuse to fail as "they have the brains, the energy, skills, the capacity and strength".

He concluded that if they still could not succeed with all the opportunities and facilities they had been given, they therefore had to be lazy, seeking the easiest and quickest way to success.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the effects of broken families on children and the role and influence of parents and teachers in moulding the young.

He condemned as traitors to Islam and the Malays those who, instead of sowing true Islamic values, taught Malay children to hate.

On Malay disunity, Dr Mahathir said that the Malays were capable of plotting with their own enemies in order to frustrate their own struggle.

In this he singled out Pas, directly referring to the party's political collaboration with the DAP.

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