

# PM to Malays: Don't give up land and independence

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**PETALING JAYA:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Malays yesterday to learn from their past mistakes of taking the easy way out, and to make sure they do not give up their land and independence.

Speaking at the launch of "Reflections of Pre-Independence Malaya", a book by Datuk Mohamed Abid, the grand-nephew of Datuk Onn Ja'afar, Mahathir said: "When the

British came' into Malaya, the Malays took the easy way out and ended up handing over their political power to them.

"We surrendered our independence very gladly and lost it only to regain it when Umno was formed. Learn from this experience.

"The Malays must know that this is the only place for them and if they surrender this, then there is nowhere for them to go, and they will lose everything.

"So, do not surrender anything to anyone, even a little bit, because people have a way of

making it bigger."

Asked to elaborate on this statement later, Mahathir said: "It is nothing . . . it is a normal thing to appeal to people to love their country and not give it up or allow people to take over it."

Speaking highly of Datuk Onn Ja'afar and his role in uniting the parochial Malays to form Umno to fight the Malayan Union in 1948, Mahathir said Onn was a forward-thinking man.

His idea to include non-Malays in Umno was an idea which was advanced and ahead

of his time, **thus it was not** acceptable to the Malays. He subsequently left and formed the first splinter party of Umno, the Independence of Malaya Party.

Tunku Abdul Rahman later succeeded in uniting the races by forming a coalition with MCA and MIC.

At a time when the Malays were divided, Onn emerged to form a united Malay front which gave the Malays a voice, said Mahathir.

For this, he should be remembered and honoured all the time, the prime minister said.