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Dr M slams selfish members (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight dissatisfied members were causing disunity simply because they could not get what they wanted from Umno or the Government.

He described them as splinter groups and a disappointed lot who criticised division heads and supreme council members because they were not selected as candidates in general elections or not given government posts.

"They are dissatisfied. They forget that the struggle is not over and that we have to face greater challenges in the future," the Prime Minister told a Press conference after joining about 40,000 party leaders, members and supporters to celebrate Umno's 57th anniversary at Stadium Merdeka.

Dr Mahathir said one should join Umno to contribute to the party, religion and the country and not for selfish reasons.

"If we are selected as a candidate, then be it... we join Puteri Umno not because we want to become a candidate. We should strive hard to work and contribute to the party and the country. We must understand Umno's struggle."

Dr Mahathir said Malays were not fully prepared to face the various challenges as they were too relaxed and not working hard enough.

They are complacent, often not thinking about the potential danger ahead, and are keen to have fun. They are also not disciplined, he said.

"We are more interested in our personal gains than fighting for the country and the nation."

To a question on Umno's strength in facing the challenges, Dr Mahathir said: "We are still united but there are signs of disunity and split. Even in the past, the party had faced divisiveness but we managed to overcome it and became united again."

On whether he had a vision specially for the Malays, Dr Mahathir said: "We must be knowledgeable, cultured and not take the easy way out. We must be willing to struggle and face the challenges."

Asked Umno's biggest achievement in its 57 years of existence, Dr Mahathir said: "One was fighting against the British and the Malayan Union while the other was gaining independence."

Earlier, he warned members against being complacent or satisfied and being lulled by their achievements and successes.

Dr Mahathir said if the Malays were weak and always looked for easy solutions to their problems, they would be recolonised.

"Today, we face a new form of colonialism by the superpowers which are more ruthless and unfair. If we are weak and not prepared to face the challenges, they will try to bring down Umno as the party is the main pillar of the country's Independence."

Dr Mahathir said Umno members must, therefore, not lose sight but reflect on the party's history and struggle as well as achievements.

He urged Malays not to be fatalistic by finding comfort in prayers without working hard.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke at length about Umno's past struggle, said the danger which the country was facing now was similar to what the party's founding fathers faced in their fight for Independence.

"They want to oppress us. Look at what happened to Afghanistan, Iraq and the threat to Syria. Do not think for one minute that only the Arab countries are facing such pressures. If we are weak, the superpowers will

do the same to us. But if we are willing to master new knowledge and pray to god, Insyallah... our prayers will be answered."

Dr Mahathir said Umno, which was established 57 years ago, had brought prosperity to its people, especially the Malays, and made Malaysia known internationally.

"Nobody can claim that they did not enjoy the fruits of Merdeka made possible by our founding fathers who had selflessly fought for Independence. The Malays, especially the younger generation in Umno, should be grateful for all the benefits which they now are enjoying and should not look for an easy way out by asking for favours to achieve wealth."

Dr Mahathir said today's generation had benefited from the country's Independence which had brought about political stability, an efficient administration and economic prosperity.

"I am very proud to see that many young people have chosen to join Umno but this struggle is not for yourself. This is for the race, religion and nation. This is Umno's struggle and we must always remind ourselves so that we will not easily lose sight.

"There are those who ask what they are getting. Some people say they have struggled for Umno for 30 years and did not get anything. No Malay can say that he did not get any benefit at all.

"First and foremost, we gained Independence and we benefited from the country's development. We get electricity, water and are able to send our children to school, enter university and become doctors, lawyers and engineers."

Dr Mahathir said since the colonial era, the country had risen to become one of the most dynamic economies and Umno had been the dominant political party.

"The Malays have achieved significant progress and had proven their abilities to develop their own country when once the colonial masters had looked down on them and made remarks that they (Malays) only knew how to catch fish and work in padi fields."

He said Malaysia had attained the level of development that developed countries had to respect and recognise its success.

He said that this was proven when Malaysia was invited for a meeting of the Group of Eight (G8) Developed Countries in France at the end of the month.

"We are chosen in our capacity as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) chairman to negotiate with the G8 developed countries.

"Previously, there were non-aligned countries but they were not invited to negotiate. This is a recognition to NAM and also to Malaysia," he said.