

## **Too much politics is bad, Dr M tells Indians**

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**By Koh Jun Lin**

Indian Malaysians are "particularly fond of politics" but this has resulted in the community undermining its influence, according to former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He urged the community to build common ground on a few salient issues at least, so that they can muster some bargaining power in influencing government policy and election results.

"The late Tunku (Abdul Rahman) used to say, 'If there is one Indian, there is one political party; two Indians, two political parties; three Indians, three political parties', and we know the number of Indians in Malaysia run in the millions, and we may have one million political parties.

"That weakens the community. You are already a very small community, but when you break up into so many centres of power and centres of influence, then you wield no influence at all," he told an audience of about 200 today.

Mahathir was giving his keynote speech in Kuala Lumpur to officiate the launch of a new NGO, the Indian Advisory Council Malaysia (IACM) of which he is the patron.

"It is for IACM to bring all the parties together. IACM must not have any ambition but to do good things for the Indian community," he said while stressing that the rights of other communities should also be respected.

### **United on major issues**

The former prime minister spoke at length about the benefits that a small but united community could reap especially if other communities are divided.

He quipped that it is okay if the Indian community fight and throw chairs at one another on some issues as long as they could agree on the important ones such as education.

"If you are divided and one group says something about education, and another group opposes, then, of course, we become very confused, the government becomes very confused and therefore you would not be able to achieve what is good for the community," he said.

Earlier, IACM president Visweswaran Navaratnam said in his speech that the group is currently focused on development in three areas namely human capital, social development and economic development.

Its next six months would be spent developing a plan to be proposed to the government

with the aim of empowering the Indian community and the plan's development would include public consultations with members of the community.

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