

May 13 a class war, says Mahathir
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Former premier Mahathir Mohamad today claimed that the May 13 racial riots which took place in 1969 was a "class war" between the rich and the poor.

NONEIn his one-hour keynote address at the Melayu Bangkit rally in Kuala Terengganu this morning, Mahathir recounted the reason why he thinks May 13 and similar popular uprisings in other countries have taken place.

"Those uprisings are caused by the development of socialist ideas and the communist thought which led to the disenfranchised poor rising to attack the rich. A class war caused by the huge gap between the rich and the poor which killed millions... And these people are from the same race," he said.

He explained that the problem is compounded in Malaysia as the divide between the haves and have-nots is made worse by the fact that both sides often come from different races.

This disparity of wealth, he said, is something the nation needs to address and correct lest events like May 13 is repeated.

However, Mahathir stressed that the non-Malays who have been graciously granted citizenship must understand that the Malays rose (in 1969) because they were losing out economically.

The Malays, he said, do not want to take what belongs to non-Malays but just want their fair share.

Mahathir also admitted that he believes that Malays will not perform in a pure meritocracy system, thus must be protected by the system to ensure that they - as "historical masters of the land" - are not left behind.

"I am not racist, I have also done a lot to help other races," he claimed, decrying those who label him as such.

He added that he is highlighting the issue because it needs to be addressed for the good of the nation and not because of any racist undertones.

'Malays in crisis'

Mahathir then warned that the Malays are now in a stage of "crisis" and they would follow the same fate like their kind in Singapore, a minority group which is not protected by the government, if they don't act now.

"If we don't act rationally, one day we will be like the Malays in Singapore. A people that are truly powerless. So they have to bow down to another race," said the former premier.

NONEHe further lamented the fate of the Malays, saying their political support has been fragmented between Umno and Malay-based opposition parties.

He said this was a dangerous precedent which weakened the Malays further, putting them

at risk of losing their place in their own land.

Mahathir also said that cancellation of the May 13 rally was due to the short-sightedness of some parties who feared that the gathering of Malays on the date of racial riots in 1969 may provoke insurrection.

He explained that the date was chosen by coincidence and without ulterior motives.

Mahathir added that people need to be reminded of events in history "if we are to learn from it".

"Learn from history or we are doomed to repeat it," said Mahathir, quoting the popular adage.

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