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In a critical position

Dr M says opposition has split the Malays

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KUALA TERENGGANU: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad blamed Pas and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) for causing disunity among the Malays at a time when the community needs to be more united than ever to face great challenges.

The former prime minister said the opposition's greed for power by dividing the Malays had left the community in a critical and precarious situation of becoming a political minority although they formed 60 per cent of the voters.

"Spread evenly among Pas, PKR and Umno, the Malay votes will just be around 20 per cent. It means the Malays have become a minority although we have the numbers to become a majority voice if we are united."

He said the Malays need to be united to ensure that they have a say in government policies by voting in a government that has their interests at heart, rather than one that has no qualms about selling off the nation for political expediency.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at the "Melayu Bangkit" gathering organised by the Gerakan Kebangkitan Rakyat (Gertak) — a Malay non-governmental organisation — at the state indoor stadium here yesterday.

He said the Malays would only have themselves to blame if they ended up being marginalised like their counterparts in Singapore, who form only 15 per cent of the voters there.

"Some may argue, who cares as long as Singapore prospers, but how much of the riches is shared by the Malays?"

He said the struggle of the Malays was far from over as many opportunities in education and commerce had been slowly eroded.

"Some quarters said the Malays had grabbed more than their share but this is just a perception. If a scientific, systematic and balanced study is conducted, it will show that the Malays have very little," he said, giving the small per capita income of the Malay-majority Terengganu as an example.

Dr Mahathir admitted that if the country's riches were distributed ac-



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is flanked by Cerakan Kebangkitan Rakyat supporters at a gathering at the Kuala Terengganu indoor stadium yesterday. — NST picture by Rozainah Zakaria

ording to merit, the Malays would end up with even less.

"I have to admit that the Malays still do not have the strength to compete with other races."

He said Pas would not be able to safeguard the interests of the Malays as the party would dance to the tune of its more powerful political allies just to stay in power.

"Pekembar, the precursor of Umno, had very few intellectuals and little money but the solid unity of the Malays made it possible to fight off the Malayan Union proposal by the British."

Later, Dr Mahathir lauded the gov-

ernment for continuing with elements of the New Economic Policy in the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP), and for taking into account the Malay NGOs' feedback on the proposed New Economic Model (NEM).

"I have not gone through the 10MP in detail but I believe the government has given due attention to the interests of the Malays as voiced by the NGOs during discussions on the NEM."

He said while giving more emphasis on developing rural areas, the government should not lose focus on education as it is a key aspect in improving an individual or a race.

On the issue of aid to Gaza, he hoped Egypt would not bow to pressure from Israel to stop humanitarian aid from being sent to Gaza through Rafah.

"I have been told that Egypt will open the border crossing in Rafah but the aid will be subjected to strict inspection at the insistence of Israel, citing fear of weapons being brought in with the aid as a reason.

"It is nothing less than a genocide process to annihilate the people of Gaza as they will slowly die without food, medicine and proper housing. The old and sick will not survive the winter in tunte "