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'ONLY MALAYS CAN SAVE THEMSELVES'

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Bersatu knows how to help Malays, Bumiputeras, but they must trust the party, says Dr M

PUTRAJAYA

PARTI Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia knows what needs to be done to help Malays and Bumiputeras, said its chairman, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

However, to do so, the people have to place their trust in the party.

"What we ask is for them to put their trust in us and be willing to follow measures that we will put into motion," he said in his policy speech at Bersatu's second annual general assembly at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre here yesterday.

Addressing a crowd of more than 1,500 delegates, Dr Mahathir, who is prime minister, said only Malays could save themselves.

"We (Malays) can succeed... We have the capabilities. But unused capabilities will not help us be-



Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad speaking at the party's annual general assembly at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday. PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD



come successful," he said, adding that if one prospers and become successful in all fields, one cannot be suppressed.

Bersatu, he said, was a temporary defender of Malays because the true defenders would be Malays themselves.

He said Malays nowadays were confused and had become ruderless.

"Umno is longer in existence. So, who and what party can they rely on? If not Bersatu, which other party?" he said to loud cheers from the crowd.

"Perhaps Pas? I have no com-

ment. (They can) choose Pas. But it is not my choice."

Bersatu, he said, was formed to ensure the security of Malays by boosting their capabilities.

"In other words, Malays have to strive to improve themselves through knowledge and skills. But they have been left far behind, and it is hard for them to play catch up with other races.

"They believe only their own race can provide them with security, and this can be done through politics. This is why there is a need to form a party participated and led by Malays.

"And this is why Bersatu was formed as a party for Malays and

Bumiputeras. While we provide them the protection, it will be done without taking away rights and privileges of others."

Dr Mahathir reminded delegates why they had gathered.

"We gather here today not because our constitution requires us to. We are meeting because we want to save Malays. We meet because we want Malays to develop. We meet because we want to restore the dignity of our race."

This, he said, was the reason behind the politics.

"It's not about wanting to become the prime minister, a minister, menteri besar or chief min-

ister. We are in politics so that we no longer have to depend on politics. We are in politics to save and free ourselves through success, as a race that can compete with anyone, so that each one of us can succeed by ourselves without the need for crutches.

"For this noble cause, sacrifice all. The rewards will be appreciated by our children and grandchildren.

"They will say that were it not for us, they would be left to fend for themselves in forests, paupers in their own country."

He said the notion that giving "crutches" was a noble gesture was wrong.

He said what was truly noble was enabling people to stand on their own two feet when overcoming challenges.

"We should not lie to ourselves. Calling ourselves 'tuan' will not make us 'tuan' if we are still coolies to others.

"For the weak, the crutches can help them. However, it should not be a permanent fixture.

"Once they regain strength, the crutches should be thrown away."

He said since Bersatu had become part of the government, it must meet the needs of the people.

"Our aim is still the same. We want to turn our country into a developed country.

"We do not want to be the race that is left out in this rich country, as it should be shared equally among all."