

For a better future, M'sians have to swallow the bitter pill

The secrets of successful management of the country lies in hard work, determination, purposefulness, drive, focus and listening to everyone, says Dr M

by **DASHVEENJIT KAUR**

MALAYSIANS will have to "swallow the bitter pill" for the betterment of the nation in the long run, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Comparing his experience as a medical doctor and how managing a nation requires a similar process to diagnosing patients, Dr Mahathir said leaders will have to make drastic and decisive decisions, when and where necessary to save the nation.

"Most times, the people, like most patients, do not like having to swallow the bitter pill.

"But a responsible leader, like any responsible doctor, may have to force their people and patients to accept the prescription for the good of the nation in the long run," he told in his acceptance speech at the Asian Association of Management Organisation's (AMMO) 20th Triennial Gala Dinner and Awards Night yesterday.

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Pic by Muhd Amin Naharul

(From left) Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM) CEO Sivanganam Rajaretnam, chairman Datuk Ng Tieh Chuan, Dr Mahathir and MIM president Tun Mohammed Hanif Omar at the AMMO 20th Triennial Gala Dinner and Awards Night yesterday

Dr Mahathir received the Visionary Leader and Nation Builder Award.

"In case you're not aware, I am a doctor by training. I spent some good years practising medicine and some of my professional experience was applied to my management of the nation.

"As a doctor, it is incumbent for us to diagnose what afflicts our patient. Once we are able to do that, we can then make our prescription. We will monitor the patient to determine the efficacy of our prescription," he said, adding that another medicine with stronger doses will be prescribed if the initial medicine fails to rectify within a reasonable period of time.

Dr Mahathir highlighted that when such efforts are ineffective, a leader would require to think out of the box and work on other options possible, similar to how a doctor would.

"In some cases, amputations and surgeries are required," he quipped, referring to some of his actions against the leaders from the previous administration after Pakatan Harapan's shocking victory in the 14th General Election in May 2018.

Stressing that the job is easier said than done, Dr Mahathir said the secrets of successful management of the country lie in hard work, determination, purposefulness, drive, focus and listening to everyone.

"Beneath this, equally important, if not more is why do we want to work so hard. It has to come from a sincere belief that what we want to do is for the betterment of our people and our nation.

"It must also be based on the principle that we are duty bound to defend our nation and our sovereignty. Helping our own people to come together and agree in developing and building our country is our

duty and it is an act of selflessness, since we too will and have reaped the benefits of living in a successful nation," he said.

To Dr Mahathir, the most basic and logical concept when dealing with a diverse group of people, is that common grounds and common purposes must be established.

"Once we have established what are the common grounds and purposes, we can build on them and after that, these common grounds and purposes will become the rallying point which we can claim to have, achieved unity in diversity," he added.

He also vowed that in his lifetime, he will not allow Malaysia to flounder and fall, to lose its dignity and sense of purpose, despite the insurmountable challenges at times.

"We have prevailed in the past and we will hopefully prevail now and, in the future," Dr Mahathir said.