



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at 'Kongres Maruah Melayu' in Shah Alam yesterday. PIC BY SAIRIEN NAFIS

## NEW MINDSET

# 'WORK HARD TO RESTORE DIGNITY'

Malays cannot depend on govt help to stay ahead, says Dr Mahathir

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**A**T a congress held to uphold the dignity of the Malays here, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad renewed his calls for the Malays to work hard instead of depending on government assistance to restore their honour.

He lamented that dignity was not accorded by expecting help from others, but through accomplishment if the Malays wanted to stay ahead in the country.

"On many occasions, we will start the event with *doa* (prayers) seeking protection, blessing and many other things from Allah. We, however, should remember that God will not provide assistance unless we work hard to improve our fate. This is enshrined in the Quran.

"I have faith in the congress. It was organised to look for ways that we can embark on to improve the community's fate."

Present were Malay leaders comprising members of the cabinet and opposition parties, including Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik and Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman.

Also present were Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Annuar Musa. The congress was jointly organised by Universiti Malaya, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Universiti Teknologi Mara and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir cited the British colonial era, when foreign workers were brought in as the country's workforce.

Malay rulers at the time, he said, thought the foreigners would return home to their respective countries after completing their work.

"It was not the case after they became complacent and decided to stay in the country. Whether we like it or not, we allowed them (foreigners) to stay here."

He said the nation's workforce was being dominated by foreign

workers because the Malays refused to do work that was considered hard labour.

"Because we are not willing to be employed in work that is *hina* (demeaning), *berat* (heavy), *kotor* (dirty) and dangerous, we let the jobs slip into the hands of others.

"People who took up such work progressed ahead and improved their position in the community.

"During my visit to a construction site of a high-rise tower, I am sad that I could not find people from the same group (race) as mine working there. Are we (the Malays) that *bacul* (coward) to do this kind of work? We must accept that this is happening today or we will not be able to restore our pride and dignity."

The Malays, he said, must realise and change their mindset if they wanted to safeguard their rights and interest.

"If we become a race that can do every kind of work and we work hard for it, rule the country accordingly, no one will look down on us.

"I want to appeal to all of you to not let others take up the work and opportunities."

Dr Mahathir said regardless of the number of congresses held, the Malays could only change their fate if they worked hard.

Even with the government's help, the Malays would be left behind if they refused to make use of the opportunity and strive for better achievements, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the congress should not be seen as racist, but as a platform for the Malays to change their fate and restore their former glory, especially in economic, social and political landscapes.

"We are not here to condemn the Chinese or the Indians, but to find ways to get the Malays back on track and empower them.

"The Malays who attended today's event understood that they have a responsibility to revive their dignity."

He said this when asked on the five resolutions presented by four local universities and one non-governmental organisation, which demanded several matters to be in favour of the Malays.

These included ensuring key ministerial positions go only to the Malays and for vernacular schools to be abolished.

On the latter, Dr Mahathir said while he had heard the resolution, it did not mean it would be implemented.

"There is a demand for single-stream schools, but the government is not compelled to implement it."

## 5 resolutions to safeguard Malay interests

**SHAH ALAM:** Five resolutions were presented at Kongres Maruah Melayu (Malay Dignity Congress) on education, religion, economy, politics and culture.

Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris' physical education graduate Nurul Fatin Aqilah Rahim, who presented on education, called for the gradual abolishment of vernacular schools, which must be completed by 2026.

"Vernacular schools do not promote unity as they use their respective mother tongues as the main language. Instead, the Vision School Policy (Dasar Sekolah Wawasan) should be enhanced in stages.

"The resolution for vernacular schools to be abolished in six years is fitting so that the language and curriculum can be standardised," she said at Stadium Malawati here yesterday.

The education resolution also demanded the scholarship percentage for the B40 group and Bumiputeras be increased, as well as a scholarship fund for poor students.

Pasir Mas member of parliament Ahmad Fadhil Shaari, who presented on religion, urged Putrajaya to ensure that all top government positions are held only by the Malays

"They include chief justice, attorney-general, chief secretary, inspector-general of police, chief of defence forces and positions such as the prime minister, deputy prime minister, chief ministers and menteri besar, as well as finance, defence and education ministers.

"The Bar Council, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia and liberal non-governmental organisations should also not meddle in Islamic matters," said Ahmad Fadhil, who represented Persatuan Peguam Muslim Malaysia.

Another presenter, Muhammad Syafiq Jebat, called on the government to outline its Malay economy agenda and other policies to safeguard the interests of the Malays and empower their economy.

"The government must be clear on its commitment to improve the socioeconomic wellbeing of the Malays without neglecting the interest of other races.

"It is important (for the government to spare no efforts) in reducing the income disparity between the Malays and people from other races.

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## 'Economic agenda should not be elite-oriented'

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"This can be done by providing upskilling training for the Malays for them to remain competitive in the workforce," said Syafiq, a law student at Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Syafiq, who presented on the economic resolution, highlighted the need for efforts to strengthen Malay economic institutions and government-linked companies.

"The entities must be headed by those with integrity and who possess the Malay spirit to ensure our agenda remains alive.

"At the same time, there is a need for the establishment of a special commission to monitor the entities to protect the interests of the Malays."

Universiti Malaya's Malay Studies academic fellow, Abdul Muqit Muhammad, when presenting the political cluster resolution, said there must be an economic agenda for the Malays.

The eradicating poverty agenda, he said, should not be seen as an effort to discriminate against other races.

"This is because most of the poor are Malays.

"Our economic policy should not be elite-oriented because the previous policy did not address issues faced by farmers, fishermen and those in the same group."

Muhammad Za'im Rosli, who is a counsellor at Universiti Putra Malaysia, urged the government to take action against those who interfered with affairs and issues involving Islam.

He described it as going against Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution, which stipulated that Islam is the religion of the federation.

"We must reject efforts to spread ideologies and teachings that deviate from Islam and the Malay culture," he said when presenting on the cultural cluster.

Za'im urged the government to accord Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka full authority to take action with regard to the abuse of Bahasa Melayu.

He said the move would elevate DBP's position and empower Bahasa Melayu as the national language.

"It will ensure that Bahasa Melayu will be used at all levels."