

Dr M on unethical leaders

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PUTRAJAYA: Aspiring leaders resorting to unethical means and even violence should be rejected, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

The former prime minister said anyone wanting to be a leader could try to acquire the right qualities, but he might not succeed.

"How he handles his failure will demonstrate whether he really has the qualities," he told an undergraduate conference here.

"There are perhaps 1,000 people in Malaysia with good leadership qualities, but they are never going to make it simply because the circumstances are not propitious for them."

Dr Mahathir gave several attributes of a good leader, one of which is that the person should not seek to blame others for failures, but to admit his own culpability.

A leader should be modest and not seek praise and glory, he added.

Dr Mahathir said a leader must have ideas on the direction he wanted to lead, ideas on the things that he and his followers must do or achieve, and ideas on the improvements of their well-being and their surroundings.

Equally important, he must know how to turn his ideas into reality.

He said the rise and fall of great nations was due to good leadership.

"When the leaders are incompetent, the countries would fall. The people may be the same, the background and the wealth and resources may be the same, but when leaders are incompetent or just plain bad, then great nations, even great empires, can fall."

Dr Mahathir said no matter how people tried to show the qualities and characters of a good leader, it would still not guarantee that they would not make mistakes.

"And, similarly, no matter how much we learn about the qualities which make a good leader, it is still possible for us to choose the wrong one." —
Bernama