

No short cut to the top: Mahathir

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PENANG, Thurs. — Umno members should not feel frustrated with the party if they do not get to the top quickly, Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said here last night.

"Youths must be patient and work their way up slowly and diligently, at the same time proving their

leadership ability," Dr. Mahathir told Penang Umno leaders at a dialogue soon after his arrival here on an official visit.

Dr. Mahathir, who is a member of the Central Umno Executive Council, said he became a Minister last year — after being in the party for 28 years.

He said every member has a chance to become a leader if he could prove his worth. Umno, he said, is flexible and pragmatic.

"There is nobody in our party who can say he wants to stay as leader and remain in power until his death," he said.

"In history only Pandit Nehru had led a party, the Indian Congress, until his death."

Frustrations

"If Umno members feel that a party leader is no longer suitable, they can always get rid of him.

"There are people who always talk of their frustrations, a malady that inflicts not only Umno members but Malays generally.

"In the universities, for example, Malay students speak only about their frustrations. All the time you hear them saying 'frus, frus, frus.'"

Dr. Mahathir said Tun Razak was particular about the quality of leadership within the party. He was anxious about the calibre of Members of Parliament.

On scholarships

He said Tun Razak usually remained in Parliament for hours, watching MPs — noting how many of them remained

in their seats, what they talk about and how they presented their views.

Dr. Mahathir also referred to the Government's move to withdraw the scholarships of Malay students involved in "undesirable activities."

The Government, he said, has ample evidence that these students had been influenced by elements trying to undermine the Government's objective of increasing the ratio of Malay to non-Malay students in the universities.