

Respect majority decision — SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Aspirants to the leadership of any organisation must always bow to the will of the majority, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

They must respect the decisions of the majority if they want their organisations to remain united and grow strong, he added.

The Prime Minister, speaking at the opening of a MIC-organised symposium on leadership, said it is a principle of the democratic process that the will of the majority be respected.

In a democratic system, everyone must concur with the choice of the majority, he said.

"The minority, however, must not feel neglected," he added. "They will have a say; a smaller voice, perhaps, but heard nevertheless."

Leadership qualities

He then spoke of the qualities a leader should have. "Leaders are not exactly a race apart; they must continue dealing with the people and their followers to know their needs and feelings. They must know when to advise their followers on the pros and cons of any demands."

It is dangerous, he said, for a leader to pander to the whims and fancies of his followers just because he wants to remain popular.

"A good leader must always be prepared to be a bit unpopular and know when to draw the line between leading and following," he said. "Knowing when to draw the line requires experience and good judgement, not acquired by reading but through understanding the psychology of the masses."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's remarks are observed as timely; Umno Youth and Wanita Umno will be electing their leaders next month. The MCA elections are also expected next month.