

DR M: COOL IT, DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY

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SEKEMHAN, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad advised those contesting for posts in the Umno elections scheduled for May 25 to "cool it" and not to get so carried away with campaigning that they ignore their duties and tasks.

The Prime Minister and party president said today that while there had always been contests in Umno, the trend now in these contests was different from the old days.

"Before, the contests were conducted quietly. Now, campaigns are conducted all over the country. Big dinners are held to which those contesting for posts are invited so that they can campaign.

"Money is also being used to try and get posts in a political organisation (Umno). Resolutions are passed by branches saying they would not support this person or that person and contestants make all kinds of promises to get support.

"All kinds of statements are also made, which could pit one leader against another. And even after the results are declared, there are some losers who refuse to accept the results and instead begin planning immediately for a future contest.

"In this atmosphere, not enough attention is paid to the work that has to be done. The attention, instead, is on building up the image (of the contestant).

"Although the party constitution allows contests for posts, we should not forget our duties, which have to be carried out," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who has been returned unopposed as party president for another three-year term, added: "There may be some who will say that I can say all this because I am not being contested and so, don't have to campaign.

"But this is just my advice. What I want to make clear is that it is the party which is important, not the individuals. It is the duty of Umno and its members to ensure that the party continues to succeed in strengthening Malay unity and ensuring peace and prosperity for all.

"Those who are contesting for posts, and Umno members in choosing their Leaders, must bear in mind that contests in the party are for strengthening Umno

and not for individuals to seek posts for their own interest."

He stressed that nobody is indispensable in Umno. "Even the present leadership, including me, is not indispensable. I am confident that Umno will continue to achieve more successes even after the present leadership leaves," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was opening the Negri Sembilan Umno building here this morning. Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasnah, Negri Sembilan Umno chief and Land and Regional Development Minister Datuk Kais Yatim and his wife Datin Masnah, Menteri Besar Datuk Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad and his wife Datin Azizah.

The Prime Minister briefly outlined the history of Umno and said that the party's biggest achievement was in uniting the Malays.

"Previously, the Malays from one State would consider those from another as foreigners. There was also the problem of communication — those from one state, speaking in a certain dialect, would not be understood by Malays in another state.

"Umno brought the Malays into one effective political organisation. Through Umno, we have overcome several challenges such as opposing the Malayan Union and succeeding in the struggle for independence," he said.

Rut, pointing to the building behind him, he warned that if the unhealthy activities in the campaigning for party posts are not checked, these could weaken Umno and there could come a time when buildings owned by Umno may not be used for the offices of the political party.

He welcomed the interest shown by the younger Malays and those who were highly-educated in Umno. He, however, urged them to channel their energies into strengthening party unity and ensuring that it had the support of the people rather than just join Umno to seek positions.

"Umno has its own principles and policies and when the party is handed over to the younger generation, I hope that they won't change it too much into a vastly different party than the one that was set up," he said.