

PM: Stop spread of dirty tactics

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today appealed for a halt to the spread of dirty tactics in party elections and said corrupt opportunism could finish Umno.

He warned that the desperate rush for divisional positions could shatter the confidence of the electorate in Umno's ability to lead the country.

Opening the Ampang Jaya division delegates' conference this morning, the Prime Minister criticised the "big towkays" among Malay businessmen who buy their way into divisional leaderships and place their "ca-

binet" in committee posts.

He said these "millionaire" intruders disrupted the leadership process and disregarded the damage they did to the party.

Dr Mahathir cited the setbacks of the party's past, in particular the May 13 incident, as proof of Umno's vulnerability and that its success in national elections could never be taken for granted.

"If the *rakyat* begin to hate Umno, we cannot predict what they will do," he said. "Those who fail to learn from past mistakes are doomed to repeat them."

He expressed concern at the "change in atti-

tude" within Umno, from the purity of the party's beginnings 39 years ago to the present growth of corrupt politics.

"We must not act for expedience and regret when it is too late. There are those who feel too certain of Umno's success whether their tactics are dirty or not but we can lose. We cannot feel that because we have won before we can go on winning forever."

The intense campaigning for the spoils of party positions, with bribery, smear attacks and combined candidatures, would conclude with the exclusion of a frustrated segment of supporters, who might then agitate

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for their share of power in unending internal conflicts, Dr Mahathir warned.

With Umno's practice of selecting Barisan National contestants in national and State elections through its headquarters, there is one method left to thwart the ambitions of divisional heads, he said.

"Perhaps we must train those members who do not know the party's history but only see opportunities in Umno.

"We must renew the spirit of Umno, steadfastness in its struggle and loyalty to the organisation," he said.

"Drop the ugly methods we have newly created and return to the original struggle and put party, people and country above all else," he urged.