

Strive for unity, Mahathir urges party members

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UMNO members were urged to strive for greater unity to ensure that the party continues to be a potent political force in the country in its struggle to protect the interests of the Malays and Islam.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said this was imperative for Umno in view of the general election either "next year or 1987".

"We will be put to the test, a test not only for Umno but also for the Malay race, Islam and our country," he said at the closing of the 36th Umno general assembly.

Members, he added, must appreciate this unity which had seen Umno through the 39 years of its struggle since its formation.

"Let us ensure that we do not survive just 39

years but will carry on as a political party for the struggle to protect the interests of our race and religion."

Dr Mahathir said it was only normal that there existed differences of opinion in a party with more than 1.3 million members.

He added that since the beginning of Umno there had always been differences of opinion among its founders. But this only served to strengthen their determination to work to achieve the objectives of the party.

Close ranks

"The founders of Umno put aside any misunderstanding and instead fostered unity and brotherhood."

Dr Mahathir said supreme council members were themselves open to criticism but appreciated this "because we are al-

ways aware of our beginnings ... we are not from the heavens ... we accept that in a political party there will exist differences of opinion".

"What is important is that we close ranks and give our fullest support and reinforce the strength of the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir stressed that there was a need for members to unite as Umno was a responsible party.

"We are not an opposition ... we do not simply criticise this and that ... we must always remember that we are the ruling party."

He said each Umno member was responsible in helping to realise the dream of owning such a magnificent building as the Putra World Trade Centre.

"The complex is the fruit of our labour."