

Dr M warns Umno of danger from within

BY JAAFAR MOHAMED

KOTA BARU, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today told Umno members that the party's enemies may not dwell outside Umno but instead may lie within in the form of over-ambitious members who were so driven by avarice and craze for power that they have forgotten party solidarity.

He said the wealth of the party, in the form of buildings and other property, would have little meaning to Umno if its foundation is corroded by disunity and lack of solidarity.

"Umno has been successful, this far, not because of the majestic buildings it has but because of the respect and confidence that others have in the party whose basis has always been unity, solidarity and tolerance.

"Other component parties joined the Barisan Nasional led by Umno because they know that Umno is a strong party. They would not have chosen us if we were weak."

Umno members should remember that the most impor-

tant thing is party unity.

The Prime Minister gave the example of the glory of the Islamic empire which later crumbled because the Muslims were not united.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was speaking at the opening of the new State Umno building in Jalan Sultanah Zainab here this afternoon.

The building was formerly a cinema which was bought over by the Kelantan Umno and renovated at a cost of \$3.7 million.

The Prime Minister also reminded Umno members that though the best form of governance was democracy it did not mean that democracy alone could guarantee goodness at all times.

He said that democracy, granted that the people who enjoyed it knew how to use it, would ensure peace and stability. But the extreme use of the rights granted under democracy would lead to disunity.

"Splits occurring among members of a democracy would lend meaninglessness to democracy itself.



DR MAHATHIR

"In a democracy, one can choose any leader one likes but one should also make sure that in the process the party remains intact. This can only be done by people who truly love the party and know that above all else the unity of the party comes first."

He said Umno members were too well versed with the history of Umno to be reminded that there had been unhappy times when a splinter group within the party led by a leader who had lost the election, fought against the leadership that was democratically chosen by the party.

Some even left the party after they lost, thereby threatening the solidarity and unity of the party.

It is not important for Umno to have leaders who were only intelligent. It was equally important to have someone liked by all and someone who put the interest of the party above personal ambitions.

"Members must therefore exercise care and prudence in their selection of Umno leaders. We do not want historians to one day write about Umno as once a glorious party that had collapsed because of disunity.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, State Umno liaison chief and Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Mohamed Yaacob, Umno vice-president and Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Wanita Umno leader Datin Paduka Rafidah Aziz and other Umno stalwarts.

More than 4,000 people attended the opening.