

# MAHATHIR REGRETS FIGHT FOR POWER

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By AZMAN AWALLUDIN

IPOH, Fri. — Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed regret today the scramble for power in Umno, saying that this had caused disunity in the party.

"And anyone who tries to split the party can be considered as traitors to Umno," he added.

The Prime Minister said that in the modern world, one must be strong and for the party to be strong, there must be unity.

He said that because of Umno's unity the country had achieved independence two years earlier than planned.

He said that to avoid disunity, the party must follow its traditions. "And, tradition has it that the number one person has always been chosen from those who had competed for the number two (post)," he

said.

"This is to ensure smooth succession."

Dr Mahathir was opening the new Perak Umno headquarters in Jalan Sultan Idris here.

Earlier, on his arrival he was given a rousing welcome by more than 20,000 people. He was escorted to the Umno headquarters by 41 Proton Sagas and 133 motor-cycles from the airport here. Preceding him were a phalanx of Umno members carrying *Bunga Mangga* and beating kompangs.

Many of his supporters wore T-shirts bearing Dr Mahathir's photograph.

Dr Mahathir regretted that there were quarters which felt that the tradition was outdated and unsuited to democratic practices.

"We can contest. We can contest in a dignified way. No need to campaign."

He said there were no campaigns since the days of Datuk Onn Jaafar.

He said that initially, he too did not want to campaign.

However, he said, he had to change his mind when someone said that he should also tell the people what others have talked about him behind his back.

"I am very dissatisfied. Now I have to go everywhere as if we are facing another general election.

"No one can say that he had not benefited from Umno. Before, many of us were poor and uneducated but now we have changed for the better," he added.

He added that in the last general election, certain Opposition parties had said that there was a crisis of confidence in the Government; that there was corruption in the country and its economy was ailing.

"Now, we have our members who have fought with us during the elec-

tions saying the same things but this time against us.

"This is really puzzling and we keep asking ourselves as to whose side these people are on," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that these things only arose because of the competition of certain posts.

"Leaders must be trustworthy and what is right must always be said to be right because we are striving for the people," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that the other Barisan Nasional parties should not be suspicious of the party because Umno was only fighting for its rights and respected the rights of the other parties.

Among the VIPs present were Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Federal Territory Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Paduka Osman Aroff.