

Don't undermine basis of Umno's political dominance, members told

Unity takes priority: Dr M.

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KOTA BARU, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today renewed his call to Umno members to remain united as this is the basis of the party's political dominance.

He hoped Umno would continue to be held together by the same unity of purpose which had enabled it to obtain independence for the country.

To maintain this political dominance, Umno members must not allow their differences to develop into forces which could undermine their solidarity.

The Umno president said they should not allow differences of views or opinions to keep them apart. No one should isolate himself just because he disagreed with the views of the others.

Differences could be settled democratically. But once a decision was made, it should be accepted.

"By isolating ourselves, we have gained nothing. By opting out we would only cause disunity in the party and thereby weaken it.

Similarities

"No one should feel estranged if some of his views are not accepted by the others in the party. Members must be willing to accept the general view that no two persons are in constant agreement on everything — even be-

"Members can hold on to their views but at the same time work together by capitalising on the similarities between them," he told the huge crowd that turned up to welcome him and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah at the Pengkalan Chepa airport for a two-day visit to Kelantan.

Among those who were at the airport to welcome the Prime Minister and his entourage were Menteri Besar Datuk Mohamed Yaacob, Defence Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen, Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, senior Government servants, Umno divisional leaders and members of Barisan Nasional component parties.

Absent was Gua Musang division leader and former Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who lost narrowly in his bid for the presidency in the party elections.

He was to have been on the same helicopter with Dr Mahathir, Datuk Mohamed and Tengku Ahmad for the flight to Jeli. He arrived by plane from Kuala Lumpur about an hour after the helicopter took off.

Later at the Menteri Besar's official residence, Tengku Razaleigh was present when Dr Mahathir met members of the Kelantan Umno divisional committees.

During the meeting, he sat on Dr Mahathir's right. The meeting was closed to the Press.

The Umno president, in his speech at the airport, also said that whatever Umno members did, they must never allow party unity to be undermined.

It should not be sacrificed by narrow self-interest or interests that were of no benefit to members.

The Malays started Umno to give them a place in the country. Having achieved political power they agreed to share it with the other communities.

But to maintain their political power in a multiracial society, Umno members must be united.

It would be tragic for the Malays if Umno lost its political power, more so if it was lost due to disunity caused by those with selfish interests.

He said members must enhance their solidarity. It was this solidarity which gave the party victory at Bukit Tuku.

By improving it further they could dispel the views that Umno was weak and "no longer able" and that the Barisan Nasional was in disarray.