

# Power grabbing their only issue: Dr M

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SEREMBAN, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the group opposed to Umno has no issues to base its struggle upon except one — to grab power.

"There is only one issue — to become Umno president and Prime Minister," the Umno president said. To achieve this, they were willing to kill Umno.

Speaking to about 1,000 Umno members at *Gelanggang Budaya* in Paroi near here, Dr Mahathir said the so-called issues the group claimed to champion were not really issues.

The group had also blamed the present leadership for the economic problems the country was facing during the recession even though policies and decisions were agreed unanimously in the Cabinet.

By NOR HAWA YUNUS

"Now that the economy has recovered, why don't they say it's because of the present leader?"

The same group, he said, did not appeal against the High Court decision declaring Umno illegal. Instead they had rushed to set up Umno Malaysia.

"These are the people who are now saying they want to revive the old Umno. They did not say this before, only after they failed to register Umno Malaysia."

He added their intention was to take over Umno in one go without holding any election.

"If they really love the old Umno as they say, and want to revive

Umno, they should be campaigning for me as I am the old Umno's president. But this is not what they want. They want to revive Umno but dismiss the president. They are not honest."

He said the group did not possess the Malay spirit, nationalistic feelings or love for the race and party.

Dr Mahathir said party members should close ranks after a party election and accept the decision made by the majority.

Seeking legal action was not the way a party should settle its problem because it was not the courts that chose the leader but the members.

"We cannot go to the courts each time. If we do then we do not have to hold a conference. The one who rules (then) is no longer us but the courts."

Dr Mahathir also said members should join a party not because of its leaders but because they believed in its struggle. In Umno's case, it was the struggle for Malay unity and supremacy.

He said the new Umno was no different from the old Umno.

On talk that the party constitution was different, he said the old Umno constitution had been changed many times over the years to suit changing conditions.

The constitution of 1946 was not the same as that of 1987.

He said there were changes during Datuk Onn Jaafar's time and numerous changes were also made during Tunku Abdul Rahman's time.

He recalled when the Tunku took over party presidency, he appointed the secretary, treasurer, information officer and five officials to the party.

"We supported him because we felt it helped him carry out his duties as he could depend on the secretary of his choice."

Later, Dr Mahathir received 37,000 membership forms from Umno divisions in Tampin, Kuala Pilah, Jempol, Jelebu, Seremban, Rasah and Teluk Kemang.

To a question on Umno's membership drive, Dr Mahathir said the response was good. He said the party had so far registered about 200,000 members, 47,000 from Kelantan alone.

He was confident the membership would reach 700,000.

On the selection of members, Dr Mahathir said it would be done by the party's headquarters.

"In this way, every person who is interested in joining the party would have an opportunity to become a member."