

Mahathir: Party can be referred to as Umno

By Shah A. Dadameah

BANGI, Sat. — Umno Baru president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the party can be called Umno because it comprised basically the same people who made up the old Umno.

"We registered the party as Umno Baru, but there is no need to call it by that name. We can just refer to it as Umno," he told reporters after opening the Dewana Food Industries plant here today.

The Prime Minister was responding to a question on the status of the party in view of a directive to drop the word "Baru."

▼ The directive was first made by its

information chief, Datuk Hussein Ahmad, during a membership drive at the Titiwangsa division recently.

Datuk Hussein said the word "Baru" was used in the Bahasa Malaysia version of the party's name, *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (Baru)*, when it was registered and the English acronym (United Malays National Organisation) remained.

Several party leaders have since come out in support of the suggestion and have told their followers not to use the word "Baru" on banners, documents and other materials promoting the party.

Datuk Hussein's remarks have

also sparked off a protest from former party members who felt that the name Umno should only apply to the party that was registered in 1946 but struck off by the Registrar of Societies on Feb 4 this year.

On the Johore Baru by-election on Aug 25, Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said the party did not attach any significance to it.

When it was suggested that the circumstances leading to this by-election were different from that of previous ones, he said: "It is another by-election. Somebody wants to step down, so we have the by-election."

The Barisan has yet to name its

candidate for the by-election which resulted from the resignation of Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad early this month. He had won the seat on a Barisan ticket in the 1986 general election.

On the recent move by Cuepac and the five National Joint Councils to ask the Government for pay adjustments for civil servants, the Prime Minister said the matter would depend on the country's financial state.

He said he was not able to make an assessment of the expenses involved as this was a matter for Finance Minister Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin to decide.