

# PM tells why some were dropped

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KANGAR, Mon. — Datuk Seri, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that some former Umno leaders were dropped as division chairmen in the new Umno because they had failed to show any interest in or had told lies about the new party.

He cited, as an example, the absence of some of them from the recent Dewan Rakyat sitting when the Constitutional Amendment Bill was tabled.

"They knew it was important to attend the sitting to vote for the Bill, but they purposely did not turn up," he said.

He told a Press conference that there were former Umno members who made derogatory statements with the intention of "killing" the new party.

"We certainly do not want people who had destroyed the party to become members because they may destroy the new party."

Yesterday, in launching the Semarak campaign for Perlis, he said certain quarters were turning the people of Kelantan against the people of the other States.

Dr Mahathir was also asked during the Press conference to comment on the call by

former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam that the new Umno accept all former members. He replied that this "could be considered."

However, he said every organisation had the right to accept or reject applications for membership.

•"Umno had rejected many applications from Malays who wanted to become members and there were also members, including myself, who were once kicked out of the party."

The Prime Minister said all Malays had the right to apply but whether they would be accepted as members was a different matter altogether.

"I have repeatedly said that members must be loyal to the party, not to me."

Asked about attempts by a few to influence the royalty, Dr Mahathir said it was clear the palace should not be involved in politics.

However, the palace could play its role in uniting the Malays, he added.