

Learn from party's history, says Dr M

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IPOH, Sat. — The younger generation of Umno members must make it a point to learn the party's historical background so that they will not repeat mistakes of the past, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

He also reminded them that it was important for them to be acquainted with the party's history in order to be able to help draw up plans for the party's future.

Speaking at the launching of an exhibition on the history of the Perak Umno at Medan Gopeng this morning, he said he wanted to remind the younger members, especially those who had just joined, that only through learning the party's history could they realise that unity was the most important factor for Umno's success.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said he wanted to stress this as he was aware that many of

those who had just joined the party were only interested in the benefits of membership.

"They do not know the party's origins. They only know that Umno exists and that they may derive benefits from joining the party."

Speaking to a large crowd of Umno supporters who had gathered there to welcome him, the Prime Minister said that Umno members would not be able to help chart the party's future if they did not know its past.

Dr Mahathir, who was accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib and other senior Umno leaders, arrived at the exhibition site about 9am. He was welcomed by a *kompang* group and Wanita members bearing *bunga manggar* and *bunga telor*.

He was driven to the site from the Hotel Royal Ca-

suarina, escorted by an entourage of motorcycles ridden by Umno members.

On arrival at the site, he put on a *tengkolok* (headgear) presented by Tan Sri Ramli. He also witnessed a *silat* exhibition before addressing the crowd.

Dr Mahathir urged Umno members to remember that the party's history had shown that unity was the over-riding factor responsible for its success in overcoming obstacles, allowing it to grow from strength to strength.

He said it was party unity that helped the Malays defeat the British colonialists and later the communists who threatened to take over the country.

He said the defeat of the communists was a special achievement as in many other countries the communists had always won.

"When I was in Lusaka to meet Mr Nelson Mandela recently, he told me he was

surprised to learn that Malaysia had defeated the communists. He told me that in other countries, communists guerillas had won.

"I told him that communists guerillas can't win unless they win over the hearts and minds of the people first. In Malaysia, they did not win because the people's heart and minds were with Umno, who led the Government. People like Umno's rule.

"It was not only the Malays who benefited from Umno's rule. Umno has succeeded in establishing a system in which all the races are represented under the Barisan Nasional.

"We can rule alone if we want to but we prefer a multi-racial system of Government as it is more conducive to peace. If we had failed, the communists could have taken over.

"We are glad that Umno has managed to establish a system that allows the Ma-

lays to retain their identity while sharing peace and prosperity with the others.

"We can only realise this by studying the history of the party," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister said that there was a trend among new members to take it for granted that they had inherited Umno and could begin to reap benefits by just filling up an application form.

"They do not realise the many problems we had with the British when forming the party. They do not know how backward the Malays were when Umno was formed. But now things have changed due to the struggles of Umno," he said.

Dr Mahathir also hit out at Semangat 46, alleging that the party had gone against the real "spirit of 46", which was to unite all Malays through Umno, regardless of "background or ideology".