

UMNO CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE SEATS: PM

S 13 JUN 1990

BESUT, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in emphasising the need for a Barisan National Government with a two-third majority, warned today that Umno could not afford to lose seats in the general election.

The Prime Minister told about 1,000 Umno election machinery members here that it would be fatal to the party if factionalism existed within it as a result of controversies over the choice of candidates.

He said no members or party supporters should refuse to work for and support a party candidate just because they did not like the candidate.

He said leaders and members who were not nominated to contest the general election should put aside their personal

differences and work hard to ensure a victory for the party.

"I do not want members to let petty things stand in the way of Barisan's victory. The members must give their undivided support to any candidate who is picked by the party," he added.

He said Umno members must bear in mind that they were not in the party to back any personality but to strive for the betterment of the race, religion and the multi-racial society.

"If members allow personal sentiments to come in the way, we will lose seats to the opposition and at the end of the day, we may not have a strong two-third majority to form a government which can serve the multi-racial community effectively,"

he said.

"There is no point winning the election if we do not have a strong majority. A government with a small majority will not be able to take firm action for the benefit of the people for fear that it will be toppled."

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, regretted that some party members and leaders had joined PAS and Semangat 46 because they did not get what they wanted from Umno.

He said it was Umno's responsibility in the next general election to convey the true message to the Muslims who had been misled by groups which misinterpreted Islam to gain political mileage.

"We have a bigger role to carry out collectively to bring Muslims back to

the original path and save them from these groups who try to act as prophets," he said.

Dr Mahathir also criticised Semangat 46 which he said was influencing Tunku Abdul Rahman to attack Umno leaders.

"I have respect for the Tunku and I honour him as **Bapa Kemerdekaan**. When the Tunku said recently that Umno leadership is *dajal* (evil), I know that the words were not from his mouth. They came from Semangat leaders who have influenced the Tunku," Dr Mahathir said.

He reminded the people that Semangat leaders were already pressuring, threatening and transferring civil servants who did not support their struggle although they were not in power.