

In-fighting will result in Umno's defeat: Dr M

By Wong Sai Wan

KUALA KLAWANG, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Umno members today against any in-fighting as it will result in the party's defeat in the next general election.

The Umno president said the party must stay united or it would play into the hands of the opposition, especially Semangat 46.

"We are definitely going to win the election. But the only way we will lose is if there is in-fighting

within Umno. If we lose the election, it is not because Semangat and the other opposition parties are strong but it would be because of our own fault by fighting among ourselves," Dr Mahathir said at a meeting with state Umno division leaders at Simpang Durian about 50km from here.

The Prime Minister said that if the party remained united and acted as one, nothing would be impossible.

"We must put the party above all else. We must remember that we serve

the party and not the other way round," he said.

He reminded members of the old Umno's 1987 party elections where the party was badly split because of in-fighting.

"We must learn from our past mistakes and not repeat them," he added.

Dr Mahathir also advised MPs and assemblymen not to be disappointed if they were dropped as candidates in the election but to continue supporting the other candidates.

He added that he had not made any decision on

which MPs or assemblymen would be dropped.

"What I had said was only a warning so that those who are eventually dropped do not feel disappointed when it happens," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that Umno members should accept and support all Barisan Nasional candidates even if they were from other component parties.

"Umno needs the support of the other communities to win seats and therefore, we should reciprocate by supporting

non-Umno candidates from the Barisan. I do not want to hear anymore complaints that this or that seat should be an Umno seat and not a MCA or MIC seat. We must abide by the principles of the Barisan."

Dr Mahathir advised the people to choose their elected representatives carefully.

"In the past, the people have chosen wisely and have continuously returned the Barisan Nasional Government. You have the right to change the government, as advo-

cated by certain groups, but be sure that any government you elect should be one that puts the people first. Not all governments are as caring as the Barisan Nasional. Be warned that the Semangat 46 group have only got their own interest in trying to form a new government. They would not be as caring as we are now," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said he did not intend to hang on to the Prime Minister's post forever but "will retire when the time comes."