

Don't abuse power, PM calls

By AZAMARIS

THE power entrusted to Umno to lead the Government through democracy should not be abused and used for the benefit of its members only.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told delegates at the close of the Umno general assembly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday that Umno, whose membership has risen to 1.73 million, still needs the support of non-party members to continue ruling the country.

"Our leadership is being reviewed every five years through the process of democracy (general election). We cannot do

things according to our needs or for the benefit of members only.

"Be careful with power. Its abuse, as proven by many leaders in other countries, will only lead to one's downfall," he said.

Replying to points raised by delegates during the four-day assembly, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Umno cannot and will not use its power to run the country by rewarding its members or letting the Malays become rich the easy way.

"Datuk Seri Anwar (the Finance Minister) collects \$31 billion in taxes annually. It's easy to share this money among us

but how long can we last before we are toppled by the people's power.

"You can give \$1 million to a poor Malay and he will become rich instantly. But trust me, that same Malay would end up poorer than before because he has the ability to spend, but not wisely, and end up having more debts.

"How can you become rich and be able to maintain wealth when you don't have the ability and skill to manage it. If we are not willing to work hard, then we will not be able to become rich," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also the Prime Minister, said democracy in Malaysia is not all about freedom to choose like what is being practised by Western countries.

"Democracy there means freedom to do anything, even to the extent of man marrying another man, living in a nudist community and losing their religion which eventually led to decadence.

He said Malaysia has been criticised by many for not practising democracy but this

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branch of socio-politics is alive and well in this country.

"It is through democracy that the opposition (PAS) rules Kelantan. It is hoped that through democracy we can rule Kelantan again. That is the edge democracy has over other systems," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the administration of the country is like a "stool with three legs" — the elected representatives who formulate the law, the civil servants who are permanent administrators and the judiciary. Like the stool; the three legs need each other to stand.

In this respect, the rulers, the elected representative, the civil service and the judiciary must act in tandem to ensure that country remains stable and enjoys high economic growth.

He said the hotly debated role of rulers and their involvement in economic activities and politics showed that Umno still wants to remind rulers of their rights under the constitutional monarchy institution.

Constitutional monarchy was the result of a compromise system which replaced the absolute rule of the rulers in the past. Under the British, the Malay royalty was still the rightful rulers of the country but it was clearly stipulated by the British that "the rulers must listen to its advisors whose advice must be followed".

"Accordingly, we can still advise our rulers. The Malays still love their rulers and that is why we want to protect the constitutional monarchy institution and not opt for a republic," he said.

During the winding of the debate, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also took the opportunity to criticise the Bar Council which has refused to recognise the appointment of Lord President Tun Hamid Omar, who was appointed by the King.