

BN TARGETS KELANTAN

PM: Umno to lead charge to win state from Opposition

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By CHAN SIEW WAH

KOTA BARU: Umno will lead an all-out effort by the Barisan Nasional to recapture Kelantan from the Opposition in the next general election.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the party would not be satisfied with winning back only some seats.

He said part of Umno's effort was to remind the Kelantan people of the party's noble struggle and that it was through unity within the party that the Malay community could be strong as during the British colonial days.

"They must not forget all that they are enjoying now are the fruits of Umno's labour," he told news-

men after launching the Kelantan Umno convention bearing the theme *Bersatu Selamatkan Kelantan* (Be united to save Kelantan) in Machang.

Dr Mahathir said it was necessary for Umno to rule the state again to facilitate development with federal allocations.

"We can do very much more for the state if we are voted back into power," he said.

Without the ruling power, he said, it would be difficult for the Federal Government to offer anything more than the development allocations that it has been giving to the Kelantan *rakyat* through the state government.

Dr Mahathir said the state government, instead of being appreciative of the development allocations, had been making use of them to gain political influence by claiming credit for projects implemented

with federal funds.

It was also going round telling the people that the state would continue to receive such funds no matter which party they voted for.

Dr Mahathir said the allocations had been spent on projects which were of no benefit to the people and it might also be directed to only the areas where the state government was getting support.

"Because of this, Umno has a watchdog-like body to ensure that the federal allocations, such as grants for districts, are equally distributed and used for genuine purposes."

He criticised PAS for making use of Islam as a political tool to win support when, in fact, it was only interested in power and material gains which the Mentri Besar, State Exco members and elected representatives were entitled to.

Dr Mahathir said Semangat 46, as a junior partner in the state government, had been reduced to nothing as all decisions were being made by PAS.

He also said Semangat 46 had been sidelined but its members were too ashamed to return to Umno.

"The brave ones have rejoined us while the others are allowing themselves to rot in the party (Semangat)," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said although Kelantan Umno was now strong and stable, he would remain as its liaison chairman for a while more to strengthen the relationship between the Kelantan people and the Federal Government.