

# Dr M: Don't overstay your welcome

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By STEPHEN THEN

**KUALA TERENGGANU:** Politicians should know when to call it a day and make way for those favoured by the majority, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"Don't overstay your welcome. If the people do not want us, we should accept it and make way.

"Human nature is such that sometimes they like us and sometimes they don't. Sometimes they love us so much, but then they suddenly dislike us without any reason even though we have done no wrong.

"I hope that if there should be any contest, be it at the division or federal level, accept the fact that there will be winners and losers.

"But there is no need to contest if we know we cannot win. We should be able to see the signs. There is no shame if we don't contest," the Umno president told some 1,000 Terengganu party leaders and members at a gathering (see also Page 3).

He stressed that the move to make way for others should not be seen as wrong or degrading.

"We should accept the fact that this is the situation. There is a saying that in politics, you get what you deserve," said the Prime Minister who was on a two-day visit to Terengganu.

He was accompanied by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Yusof Nor, Deputy Primary Industries Minister Tengku Mahmud Mansor and state leaders at the function.

Dr Mahathir said he wanted to see unity in the

party upheld even during elections and the loser should approach the winner, congratulate him and give him support.

"Don't reach a stage where we don't speak to our rivals. If the people had made a choice, they would have chosen someone who is capable," he said.

He reiterated his call that contestants and rivals should close ranks after the election.

Dr Mahathir said his message was not meant for any particular candidate.

"I have said that if possible, there should not be any contest for the presidency and the deputy presidency. I gave this advice as it was my view.

"But some people may say that I was afraid of being challenged and that is why I stressed that if possible there should be no contest for the deputy presidency," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that even though he had given the advice, there were still many who insisted that they wanted a chance for election.

"I have heard from my left and my right, my front and my back, voices that asked me to allow them to make nominations.

"As a true practitioner of democracy, I cannot stop them and must allow an election but I will not support any party," he said.

He noted that some had said he had allowed the contest.

"But my decision was up to that stage only. It is all up to the members to decide, but they must choose in a disciplined manner," Dr Mahathir said.