

# Uphold the party, says Dr M

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ALOR STAR: Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has appealed to members to uphold the party and not any particular personality.

He stressed yesterday that it would be a deviation from Umno's principles and struggles if members chose to rally round an individual instead of the party.

The proper way out for members, the Prime Minister advised, was to elect a leader based on his ability and not be swayed by the prospect of material gain.

Dr Mahathir reminded them that previous experiences had proven that

the party would suffer if a leader was supported based on personal factors.

"Any action to sacrifice the overall good and interest of the party for an individual will be detrimental to all of us.

"Members must rally round the party, not any one leader. But if you say you are supporting someone because of the party, that is acceptable.

"Backing someone just because you want a licence from him is an outright deviation from our struggles and the party constitution that we stand for," he said when opening the Kubang Pasu Umno delegates meeting

in Jitra.

The meeting attracted members from around the country who came to follow the president's speech and the meeting. Also present was Menteri Besar and division deputy head Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff.

Dr Mahathir, who heads the division, said Umno was not formed to favour any one person or group but to uphold the community and nation.

He said members who supported self-centred leaders were also guilty of exploitation.

He reiterated his neutral stand in the contest for the deputy president

and vice-president posts, stressing that he would only champion the cause of the party.

Touching on some of the campaign issues, he also said the party valued all its young, old, male and female members.

Dr Mahathir also spoke on the danger of delegates being exploited at the general assembly as was the case in 1987.

He said many members were going all out to be chosen as delegates to "benefit" from their votes, expressing regret over such state of affairs.

Dr Mahathir's speech was well received by leaders and members

here.

Osman described the party president's remarks as "full of impact."

"His highlight on party unity is timely. I hope all party members throughout the country heed his call," he added.

Kubang Pasu Umno information head Haji Shaarani Hassan said that Dr Mahathir had been able to touch on every aspect and explain matters like no one else could.

Haji Saad Taib, a committee member of the division's economic bureau, said he was touched by the president's frankness and ability to speak without fear or favour.