

Mahathir: Losers still have role to play in party

By ROHAIZAD A. RAHIM

KUALA LUMPUR: Candidates who lose in the Umno elections will still have a role to play in the party, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said as long as the elections were conducted in a just, fair manner, losers must accept the decision of the members.

"Those who lose are still needed as the party needs each and every member to achieve the aspirations of the race and the nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said this in his message in conjunction with the Umno general assembly on Nov 4.

He reminded members that the party elections were conducted to pick leaders in a democratic manner.

He expressed satisfaction that, generally, the elections at branch and division levels were held without hurting the principles of democracy practised by the party.

However, he was disappointed with the surfacing of poi-

son-pen letters in the run-up to the elections.

He said the writers of such letters only wanted to disrupt the elections and put leaders at loggerheads with each other.

He was also thankful that smear campaigns initiated by these writers had failed.

"I am disappointed that the culture still exists; nonetheless our members realise their (the writers') evil intentions and that they (the writers), some of whom are party members, are the real enemy."

He also called on members

to be ready for future challenges, especially in an era of globalisation, information and sophisticated technology.

"A party will have to go through changes from time to time and if it fails, it will stagnate and not be able to adapt itself to the politics, economy and culture within and also the world community.

"If we are not sensitive to changes around us, we will not be able to grab opportunities emanating from these changes to benefit the party and the nation."

However, Dr Mahathir cautioned that not all changes would be beneficial and constructive as there would be those which could also be destructive.

He said the future also demanded that the people acquire knowledge and enhance their skills and abilities.

"We must enhance our resilience and competitiveness with other nations and it is appropriate that we excel in science and technology which are the keys to the future," he said.