

Umno members told not to engage in activities that will weaken pa

Dr M: Learn from history

By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Umno members that the party could fail if they do not learn from the mistakes of others and the country's history.

The party president and Prime Minister said many organisations which struggled for the independence of other countries have now disappeared.

"Umno will also face the same fate if we are not careful, if we do not learn from the history of other countries and from our own history," he said.

Dr Mahathir sounded out this warning to the members in his opening address at the Umno annual general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here today. Delegates and observers from the party were joined by leaders and representatives of the National Front at the opening ceremony which was shown live over Radio and Television Malaysia.

Amidst nods of agreement from his audience, Dr Mahathir said Umno, its partners in the Alliance and the National Front have been in power at the federal level and in almost all States since Malaysia achieved independence 37 years ago.

He said in the history of political democracy, it is rare that a party is chosen by the people over and over without a break for four decades.

Dr Mahathir added that the people would feel indebted to the party which has struggled and helped the nation achieve independence only for so long. "The people forget easily," he said.

He reminded the members not to engage in activities that could split and weaken the party in the face of the coming election.

He said: "We will not win if our party loses. We will not lose if our party wins. In an election, what is important is not the individual but the party. That being the case, please give priority to the party.

"It is not logical to hope

that all quarters support us if we contest, and then withdraw our support if others were chosen to contest. Those who have found their place and position should remember that they are there on the strength of the support they receive from others.

"They should then not be inactive should their places be given to their supporters, especially after having enjoyed these positions and support on several occasions."

He said that everyone enjoyed what they had as a result of the party's struggle. He told them to reciprocate the good deed the party had done for them.

As a plea, the party president called on Umno members not to spoil the party just because some of them do not get (seats) this time because they had reaped much benefits on previous occasions.

"For those who are patient, there is still an opportunity," the Prime Minister

said.

He then said that preparations for a general election have been made by Umno divisions and branches. But they could be further enhanced, he said.

"Don't be too confident that we become careless. "Dry" and "wet" runs should be repeated again and again to ensure that weaknesses are identified and overcome.

"We cannot possibly be perfect, 100 per cent free of any shortcomings. But we

should work hard towards perfection," he said.

He reminded the delegates of the co-operation that Umno had successfully forged with other components of the National Front that had made the country independent earlier, and given it the right to administer and develop the country to the present high level.

"We co-operate with the MCA and MIC although we opposed the stand of the non-Malays during the Malayan Union. We are pre-

pared to co-operate with them because, while they gain good from this co-operation, we do not lose anything," he said.

Dr Mahathir also touched at length on other issues pertaining to the political co-operation between Pas and the DAP, the use of the word "Islam" in Pas' name, justice and fairplay, the international recognition which the Government and country had received, privatisation, social problems, and Umno and democracy.