

Forge rapport with people in Pas, Umno members told

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JITRA, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight called on Umno members to close ranks and forge rapport with the people in Pas in the spirit of Muslim brotherhood.

The Prime Minister said Umno members should not distance themselves from those in Pas.

"We should attend their *kenduri* (feasts) or visit members of their families in the event of deaths," he said at a thanksgiving dinner organised by the Kubang Pasu Umno at Institut Perguruan Darul Aman here.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff and Tunjang Assemblywoman Barishah Saad. About 2,000 people attended the dinner.

Dr Mahathir said he was sad that certain Pas members still refused to establish goodwill with Umno members.

"We are opponents during elections but we should close ranks after they are over," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also saddened by reports of broken marriages after the general election.

"There are also Pas members who branded Umno members as infidels after the election," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also

Umno president, said the Government would take steps to address the problem of Pas members deviating from the true Islamic values.

"We will find ways to rectify the problem but as members of Umno we should try our best to get closer to them but whether they are willing to accept our spirit of friendliness or not is a different matter," he added.

The Prime Minister also advised Umno members to reunite the people at the kampung level and reminded the newly-elected representatives to serve the people as best as they could.

He hoped they would strive to solve the problems and hardships of the people.

Dr Mahathir also thanked the people in Kubang Pasu where he is the MP and the Barisan Nasional workers for helping him retain the parliamentary seat.

Recounting his political career, Dr Mahathir said he felt very lucky to have the strong support from the Kubang Pasu electorate and "for inviting me to represent them since the 1974 general election".

"I am from Alor Star, but I could not contest in the area because the constituency had already been allocated to the MCA.

"So, in 1964, I was offered to contest in the then Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary seat. I won the first time but lost the seat in 1969. For five years, I was alone besides being expelled from the party.

"In 1974, I got another chance to contest but not in Kota Setar Selatan since it had already been allocated to Pas when the party was in the BN coalition.

"However, the Kubang Pasu electorate came to my aid and asked me to represent them to this day," he said, adding that he won uncontested when making his debut in Kubang Pasu.

The Prime Minister said he owed it to the Kubang Pasu voters for their "undying support" for him.

"In fact, I feel so lucky because I have gone through it all. I have won in a contest, lost and won uncontested," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he also owed it to the strong BN election machinery which comprised the component parties.

He said in the Malaysian system of democracy, one could only become a Minister if one won in one's constituency.

Dr Mahathir said the recent election reflected unity among the people of all races. He said the multi-racial people had shown tremendous co-operation in the election.

Dr Mahathir said in at least two seats where the Chinese formed the majority, the voters had chosen the Malay BN candidates.

And in Malay-dominated areas, the voters rallied their support for Chinese BN candidates.

"This is something very special in our country and we should preserve this spirit," he added.