

# 'Longest' speech written during three-day cruise

STAR 2 JUN 2001

THE peace and serenity of the sea gave Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad the inspiration and patience to write his opening address for this year's Umno general assembly.

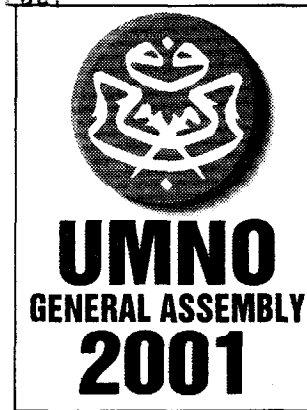
The party president's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, said he took a long time to prepare the speech, adding that she believed it was the longest he had ever written.

Dr Mahathir took two hours to deliver the speech titled *Melayu Mudah Lupa* (Malays Forget Easily) on Thursday.

"Ideas for speeches usually come very easily to him but this time he took a while to get it. Usually, he prepares his speeches much earlier for the general assembly, but this time he couldn't think of a subject to talk about," she said.

The saving factor was a three-day break at sea.

"The thing about my husband is that he needs peace and quiet to write his speeches, so what we did was to go on a three-day cruise."



The speech was written as the vessel sailed around the islands of Tioman and Aur in the South China Sea.

Dr Siti Hasmah said that her husband was initially "a bit worried" whether he could get some inspiration on the subject, adding that he always wrote his own speeches.

Dr Siti Hasmah also related an incident in which Dr Mahathir wrote about 20 pages and then tore them up, threw them away and started writing again.

The Prime Minister's wife,

who is a party member, attends the general assembly every year.

"I don't hold a position but am only a supporter. If an Umno member does not support the party, who is going to support it?"

"So, you have to come. Besides there are so many things you can learn from the speeches expressed by the delegates in the hall," she said.

Dr Siti Hasmah said her husband's speech this year was his way of expressing his feelings and his worry about how people forgot history easily and what one had to go through to be successful.

"Many people may say that it is boring. *Dengar itu-itu sahaja, berulang kali macam rekod buruk.* (Keep hearing that only, repeatedly like a broken record).

"But we need to be reminded. I need to be reminded, he (Dr Mahathir) himself has to be reminded of what has been done so we don't take things for granted ... to look ahead and prepare for the challenges ahead," she added.