

Love Umno above any individual, members urged

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Umno members, particularly from Kelantan, to love the party above any individual.

He said the party should take precedence over any individual, including himself.

"The party is not owned by anyone, even I do not have any rights to the party. The party is our vehicle to achieve our struggle. That is why we have to love it and ensure its victory.

"When the party is victorious, we will all benefit from it," he said at a dinner with Kelantan Umno leaders and supporters at the residence of Kelantan Umno liaison committee chief and National Economic Action Council executive director Datuk Mustapa Mohamed here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said he was often pessimistic about Umno's chance of recapturing Kelantan despite the optimism expressed by party leaders of the state.

However, he said Umno could win back Kelantan if all the state Umno leaders gave a firm commitment to back him in all decisions.

"Maybe you should give your commitment by swearing upon the Quran, that if

you are not chosen as a candidate, you will not sabotage anyone else.

He said many Kelantanese did not like PAS but they also did not like to see squabbling Umno leaders.

Dr Mahathir said the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein had advised him to be patient because the state Umno members would close ranks in times when they came face to face with PAS.

"It was true, they (Umno members) closed ranks under him and later, Tun Hussein Onn, but have not during my time. When they are not happy with the candidates, they split.

"We have never been able to satisfy everyone. If we chose this person, that person will get upset. If they are just upset and go home to sooth their feelings, then that's fine. But sometimes their supporters are also upset and they supported the opposition," he said.

Consequently, Dr Mahathir said the party would lose by narrow margins to the opposition parties.

"You don't need a lot of Umno members to vote against you to lose to the opposition," he said, adding that he lost in the 1969 general election because the Chinese, who supported him in 1964, voted against him although support from the Malays had increased.