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Dr M to launch Umno's SMS service on Friday

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch an Umno-short messaging system service this Friday.

It will provide the party's three million members with easy access and first hand news on the party and its leaders.

Umno executive secretary Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said the introduction of the system named BersamamuUmno dan SMS would represent, for the first time, mobile communication and webbased applications being fully utilised by a political body.

Tengku Adnan said with technology rapidly increasing its hold on human interactions, politicians needed to be IT-savvy.

He said the free flow of information would ensure Umno members would not be swayed into believing rumours and baseless stories on matters pertaining to the party.

"We expect that more than 30,000 party members will be using the system initially. At least 50 per cent of our members carry handphones, so we expect users of the system to increase in a short period."

With the system, members would not only be able to retrieve information concerning the party, but they could also check their membership status, get first-hand information on the activities of Umno leaders, news flashes, information announcement and coverage on the party's activities and events.

"Umno is aware of today's channel of communication. SMS, for example, is becoming a trend."

He said Dr Mahathir would be launching the first phase of the system, enabling members to have access to database inquiries, Umno membership status and the party leaders' addresses and telephone numbers.

"The second phase of the project will enable members to retrieve information on opinion polls and voting services as well."

Tengku Adnan said Malaysia, which has eight million mobile phone users, sent more than 200 million SMS monthly, indicating the people's taste for sophisticated services.