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PM: Don't flaunt your wealth (HL)

IPOH, Sat. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight reminded political leaders not to flaunt their wealth and position and neglect their responsibility to the people.

The Prime Minister said they should remember that their status as political leaders with position and wealth came from the people who supported and chose them to lead the community.

"Political leaders cannot afford to be conceited or arrogant," Dr Mahathir said at a dinner gathering organised by the Perak Backbenchers' Club to honour his 21 years as Prime Minister.

It was held in conjunction with the four-day 17th Piala Perdana badminton tournament which ended at Stadium Indera Mulia earlier.

Present were his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, ministers, menteris besar and BN leaders.

"To survive in the political arena, leaders must remember that it is the people who have put them there, and without their support, they are nowhere.

"If leaders strut around with their wealth, people will eventually lose respect for them."

Dr Mahathir said leaders must also learn to win the hearts of the people if they want to be good leaders.

"The people must be able to accept new leaders and allow them the opportunity to use their capabilities to lead the nation and further develop the country."

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, also said the people should not regard him as an extraordinary being who was able to do wonders for the country, but just as an ordinary person who was given the chance to become a leader and who had used it to his advantage to develop the country.

"It was not done by me alone but the combined effort of BN leaders, government servants and, most of all, the people."