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Dr M: Focus on social activities

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight Umno members should not focus solely on activities directly connected with politics.

He said there were various social programmes, such as tutoring poor students and helping the needy, that could also be organised for the community.

"Normally, Umno members get together during general elections and party polls. They do not show much interest in co-operating to help others," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also former Umno president, said this at the Cheras Umno division's 10th anniversary dinner here. Accompanied by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, they joined about 1,000 division members and guests at the event.

He also launched Buletin Umno Cheras, published by the division's information bureau.

He said Umno could weaken if its members did not sacrifice for other Barisan Nasional component parties for mutual benefits.

He said other BN component parties might refuse to co-operate if Umno was overcome by greed, such as in seat allocations for elections and government positions.

He also said Umno elected representatives should learn to make way for others after serving a certain number of terms.

"Regardless of how good our leadership is, people will soon become fed up when we stay too long. The most we should stay is three terms and then give way for younger people to take over.

"The problem is young people, when they are given the opportunity and manage to win seats, also refuse to give way even after they have become old themselves," he said.

He proposed that Umno Youth set up its Putera wing, similar to Puteri Umno, as the present movement's members could not relate with the needs of the younger generation.

He said the present Umno leadership could look into the matter.