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PM: History shows Umno willing to share power

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KOTA KINABALU, Fri. - The fact that Umno is willing to share power with other parties, although it has the strength to lead the Government on its own, shows that the party and Malays are not greedy, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said although Umno fought alone against the British who were planning to form Malayan Union in Malaya, the party later co-operated with other races to gain independence.

"Umno was initially formed to fight plans by the British to colonise Malay states in Malaya. The British were already in control of British North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak and they wanted to own land in Malaya.

"When the Malays realised that they would lose their land, they united to fight the British and plans to set up Malayan Union had to be aborted.

"After that, Umno co-operated with other races to achieve independence for Malaya.

"This shows that Malays and Umno are not greedy. They were willing to share Malaya with other races which had made Malaya their home," he said.

Dr Mahathir who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman said when Sabah, Sarawak and Malaya joined to become Malaysia, other races from the two eastern States were also accepted in the power-sharing concept.

"That is why today Umno is a member of a coalition of 14 parties. We have this coalition of parties to develop Malaysia.

"It has proven to be effective as Malaysia is the most successful of all developing nations. It is because Umno and other components are not greedy," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when officiating at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Sabah Umno headquarters in Karamunsing, here.

The 10-storey building will be constructed on a 0.48 hectare site close to the Wawasan Plaza.

Dr Mahathir arrived for the ceremony from the Sutera Harbour Resort led by a convoy of some 100 superbikers. About 10,000 people attended the ground-breaking ceremony.

Present were Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman, Umno supreme council members and BN component party leaders.

Dr Mahathir said Umno could rule on its own if it wanted to but chose to co-operate with other components to form the Government so that the needs of other races would not be sidelined.

"There is no discrimination against any party or race in Malaysia. The Government, with Umno in the lead, follows the rule of law. We work hard to develop the nation and to bring prosperity to all races," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said some quarters have described him as a dictator who is feared by the people.

"Some say that Malaysia is led by a dictator, who is feared by the people. This is their allegation ... but it does not have a dictator like the one in Iraq before he (Saddam Hussein) was defeated.

"We now know that many were killed during his (Saddam's) rule and that the people feared him because he was cruel. He was surrounded by his guards and people could not meet him and shake hands the way we do here.

"If it is true that this country is ruled by a dictator, the people would not dare to come near the dictator who was chosen through an election system and who wants to retire based on his own decision," he

said.

Dr Mahathir said as the backbone of the BN, Umno should continue to be strong and uphold its integrity, as a weak Umno would cause the Government to become weak.

He said Sabah Umno had played a role in strengthening the Sabah BN Government since it spread its wings to the State 12 years ago.

"Sabah Umno is the second largest in the country and we have high hopes on Sabah Umno in the next election. The fact that it will soon have its own building shows that Sabah Umno has grown," he said.

He also reminded party leaders and members in Sabah to continue struggling for the people and the nation, and not for self-interests.