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Dr M: Changes in Umno inevitable

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CYBERJAYA, Fri. - Hinting at the need for an infusion of fresh blood into Umno, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said party leaders who could no longer carry out their responsibilities would be replaced.

The Umno president and Prime Minister said no one was indispensable and changes in the party hierarchy, especially at State-level, were inevitable.

"Nobody is permanent. If there is a need to change, we will change but we have no special programme (to carry out such changes).

"If I am not able to carry on my work, I will also have to go, so I'm going. If I can go, other people can go," Dr Mahathir said, commenting on the shake-up in Kelantan Umno, and hinting that similar action would be taken in other States.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a Press conference after launching MSC-status company InvestQjaya's Fast Track and Technology Showcase laboratory here.

Yesterday, the Umno president announced a major shake-up of Kelantan Umno with the dropping of deputy head Datuk Annuar Musa and three other key office-bearers.

Dr Mahathir had said the changes did not mean that those dropped had not performed well, but that others should also be given a chance to hold those positions.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir said the Government was committed to enhancing the electronic and information technology-based research and development capacity of companies operating in the Multimedia Super Corridor by extending the necessary assistance.

He said while Malaysia had proven itself in research and development in the agricultural sector, it was time to venture aggressively into electronic R&D.

"Our rubber trees now produce 10 times more latex than the original ones, the same goes for palm oil ... our inventors have shown their capabilities and the Government has set up various research laboratories for this purpose.

"Now electronics is the relevant thing of our times and we have to do research in electronics. We may be behind many countries but we have to move, we have to go into research and development ourselves," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Malaysia not only depended on local R&D laboratories but also foreign ones which were committed to excellence.

"It is for this reason that we invite them to operate here in the MSC and try to provide whatever support we can," Dr Mahathir said, adding that he had invited InvestQjaya president and chief executive officer Dr Sadeq Faris to Malaysia when they met in New York last year.

Sadeq is also the CEO of Reveo Incorporated, which is the parent company of InvestQjaya.

At the Press conference, Dr Mahathir also announced the Government's decision to invest in a RM100 million R&D laboratory which would be built and rented out to participating companies in the Reveo project.

"We want to continue with the R&D here and for this purpose, the Government has agreed to set up a laboratory. The laboratory will also conduct studies on other projects. The rights to the inventions will be based on the type of investments," said Dr Mahathir.

Also present was CEO of Multimedia Development Corporation Datuk Dr

Mohamed Arif Nun.