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`Unity will further strengthen the party'

ANY polemic and political posturing among members over the change of party leadership will weaken the party and the Malays, said Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib.

"I am sure we all know the things we need to do which could be an asset to the party as well as the characteristics which could become a problem to it.

"I am not trying to teach anybody on this matter, but experience has taught us that unity plays a vital role in strengthening the party," he said in his winding-up speech at the end of the Umno general assembly yesterday.

He was confident the Malays, in particular Umno members, are "strong enough" to resist any slander by their enemies who are out to destroy the party.

Praising the leadership of party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said the Prime Minister had led the country to the brink of achieving the status of a full-fledged developed country, which speaks volumes of what he has done for the country.

"I would like to record my gratitude for the leadership of Dr Mahathir and I am confident his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will continue the excellence of Umno's services and contributions to the country.

"Umno members, on the other hand, must always remember that it is their duty to ensure that the party remains strong."

Muhammad said Umno had to maintain its strength because as the main party in the Government, its position would determine the stability of the country.

"We have to uphold the responsibility given by Allah to ensure that this party remains strong."

Reiterating the importance of unity, Muhammad called on members to be sincere in their support for the party leadership.

"Unity of the party will always be the determining factor in the survival of the Malays."