

## **Dr M: Umno won GE13 as people had no choice**

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Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has poured cold water on Umno's gains in last month's general election, despite its allies suffering devastating losses, declaring that this happened because the people had no other choice.

NONE "We may pat ourselves on the back because Umno is still the party that won the most (seats) in the 13th general election. But this was not because Malays still support Umno.

"In fact, Umno's victory in the GE13 is because they had no choice. They feared what would happen if (Opposition Leader) Anwar Ibrahim, won together with DAP," Mahathir said in his blog posting today.

However, he warned that this trend was unlikely to continue in the next general election.

"If Umno does not clean itself from corruption and self-interest, the Malays will look for other champions," he said.

He also lamented that Umno was on decline and was no longer held in as high esteem as before.

"Many Malays are angry with Umno, they see it as irrelevant and a party that must be rejected.

'Umno fights for self interest'

"Why? Because Umno no longer fights for race, religion and country. Umno is seen - and it is true - to fight for the interests of certain people and its members only.

"Umno fights for positions and rank, to enrich themselves, for reward and their own pockets," Mahathir said in a stinging evaluation of the party that he dominated as president from 1981 to 2003.

He attributed the party's decline to the refusal of its current leaders to allow in new talents, who could pose a threat to their position.

"They work to reduce the possibility of them being challenged, to reduce the

likelihood that they will be replaced by people who are more qualified.

"There is no need for new members because the existing members need to protect their share of the rewards. If there are too many members, more must be shared and it will be less than before," Mahathir said.

NONEBy allowing only less talented people into the party so that they are not a threat, these people will eventually replace the existing leaders when they retire, thus creating a cycle of decline, said the former premier of 22 years.

"This happens to the whole party. The longer it is, the less talented leaders there are in Umno," he said, adding that as such, talented people have opted to join the opposite side.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had on May 31 indicated that he was open to challenge in the coming Umno elections as Umno is a democratic party.

However, Mahathir had lamented before the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan on May 25 that Umno had no alternative other than Najib, despite Najib having led BN through its worst-ever general election.

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