

# Dr M: There's attempt to demonise me

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes there is an attempt to "demonise" him and expel him from Umno.

"There are many people doing it... I know there is this process of demonising me so that I will be hated by Umno," he said on the sidelines of the Global Exchange Forum here.

"They are building up the tempo ... associating me with Pas and the Opposition."

The forum is jointly organised by the Malaysian Institute of Management and Urban Forum.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on remarks made by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, who on Monday called for the former prime minister to leave Umno in view of his willingness to share a platform with the Opposition.

"The party does not belong to him (Nazri), it belongs to the Malays. Nazri

has no right to ask someone to leave the party. In fact, I joined Umno before he was born," Or Mahathir said, adding Nazri was merely a "hatchet man".

Umno leaders have repeatedly said they had no intention of sacking Dr Mahathir. They think he is pressing the issue because he wants to be seen as a "martyr".

Nazri yesterday called on Dr Mahathir to "rebut the substance" of what he had said on Sunday. Among other

things, he noted that Dr Mahathir reneged on the promises made to the Government and had forgotten the advice he gave Umno leaders before retiring.

"I don't care if he dismisses me or whether I am a hatchet man. But deny or rebut the substance that I brought up," Nazri said in Parliament lobby yesterday. "I am not disturbed at all with his 'hatchet man' remark. I am defending the Government," he said.