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Dr M's recipe for party success

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KUALALUMPUR: Umno leaders must go to the ground and resolve issues the people have with the party.

Former Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had this advice yesterday when commenting on Datuk Seri Najib Razak's presidential address.

Najib had identified the problems that Umno faced and outlined ways to rehabilitate and rejuvenate the party.

Dr Mahathir, the former prime minister, said Umno leaders, especially those who had in the past distanced themselves from their communities, have to build stronger rapport with the people and address their grouses.

They should also understand why many shifted their support from the party.

"As a member, I feel that getting closer to the people is important as many leaders isolate themselves and hope to use their power to gain people's support."

Dr Mahathir said Umno



MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu greeting Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Putra World Trade Centre. On the right is Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

must realise that its political struggles would never end as the party constantly faced new needs and challenges.

He said while it was easy to make promises and speeches, Umno leaders must live up to their promises.

"The people, including Umno members, will be watching to see if you walk your talk. Hence, the government and the party must deliver."

On Umno's initiative to amend its constitution, Dr Mahathir lauded the move for promoting democracy al-

though he was unsure if it would solve the problem of money politics.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said all Barisan Nasional components needed to work together as Malaysia was a multiracial country.

"The country cannot be ruled by one race, even if you are the majority."

He was also optimistic that the other BN component parties would emulate Umno in making drastic changes to reinvent the party, saying that their current formula was a

failure.

On the Indian community, Dr Mahathir said they must remember that they had an important role to play despite being small in numbers.

On MCA, Dr Mahathir said upheavals in the Chinese-based party would leave a negative impact on BN.

"We need a good and strong MCA and leaders must realise that if the people don't want them, they have to step down ... but the culture of stepping down has not developed in this country."