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Dr M: Umno not ready for polls

Party may suffer bigger loss due to internal factions, says former president

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JITRA: Umno is not ready for a general election as its members are not fully behind the party, former president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Umno may face an even bigger loss if the general election is held soon as the fighting spirit of its members is waning, he added.

"I still see factions in the party as

some members are loyal only to individual leaders and not to the party.

"When their preferred candidate is not chosen they will sabotage the other candidate."

Dr Mahathir, the country's fourth prime minister, was speaking to reporters after meeting Federal village security and development committee members in Kedah at the Dewan Wawasan here yesterday.

He feared this "culture" would again rear its head after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announces the candidates for the next general election.

"It is my view that Umno members are focusing more on becoming elected representatives or division chiefs, as they believe they will then be given projects when holding such posts," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when Umno was fighting for the country's independ-

ence, its members were willing to surrender their jewellery to support the party.

"Now, if we ask members to contribute, they will ask for something in return," he said.

Commenting on the hudud law that PAS said it will implement, Dr Mahathir said it was merely a gimmick to gain support for the party.

"It is not suitable to implement hudud law in a multiracial country like Malaysia," he said.

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- TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD