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Dr M calls on Umno to field outsiders

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MALACCA: Umno should be bold enough to field candidates who can ensure victory in the general election even if they are picked from outside the party fold, said former president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Reminding the party that it should focus on ensuring that a candidate could bring victory, Dr Mahathir said that there was nothing wrong for the party to field an outsider as a candidate.

"From what I see now, Umno is facing a problem in fielding candidates who are of calibre and able to garner the support from voters.

"So, if Umno does not give room to candidates from outside the party, then it might face a uphill task in the coming general election," he said after delivering the keynote address at the Fully-residential School International Symposium at Puteri Resort, Ayer Keroh here yesterday.

Present was Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.



Former prime minister **Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (centre)** receiving a souvenir from the Education Ministry's residential school management and school of excellence division director, **Rosland Hussein**, yesterday. With them is Malacca Chief Minister **Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam**. **Bernama pic**

Citing the appointment of Datuk Seri Idris Jala, the former head of Malaysia Airlines as a cabinet member, Dr Mahathir said Idris was not a politician but he had the qualities and capabilities to contribute towards the country's progress.

Dr Mahathir said Umno should also take into account that voters who decided the fortunes of an Umno candidate were not from the party, but outsiders.

"Even if all Umno members come out and vote, it will not translate into

victory for an Umno candidate.

"So, if an outsider ensures the victory of the Umno candidate in the general election, then we as Umno members, should also support outsiders when they are fielded to contest under the BN banner."