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Dr M: Field talented outsiders

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MALACCA: Former Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has suggested that the party consider fielding talented outsiders with a clean record in the next general election.

Umno should apply meritocracy when deciding on candidates for the polls, he said after delivering the address at the "Global Culture Generates World Unity" symposium in Ayer Keroh here.

"What is wrong with fielding someone from outside (the party) who is capable and free from corruption and other problems?" he said.

Also present were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam and other state leaders.

Dr Mahathir said Umno faced a scarcity of competent leaders at the top for decades due to the unwritten policy of restraining those with brains from joining the party.

This had eventually resulted in it being difficult to find suitable candidates and the party might face the prospect of losing if it field incumbents who are deemed incompetent, he said.

"It will be hard (to win) if we don't field people from outside the party as I find that many of our present leaders are not well-accepted by the rakyat."

Dr Mahathir said Umno should be mindful of the fact that it needed support from outside the party to win in the general election.