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BAGAN SERAI, APRIL 25 (BERNAMA) -- DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED SPOKE TODAY OF THE EXISTENCE OF CERTAIN GROUPS WITHIN UMNO WHO CONSIDERED THAT PARTY PROCEDURES NEED NOT BE FOLLOWED.

THESE GROUPS SAID THAT IF THEY FOUND A LEADER WAS WRONG, THEY HAD THE RIGHT TO TAKE ACTION OUTSIDE OF PARTY PROCEDURES OR REGULATIONS.

DR. MAHATHIR STRESSED THAT UMNO HAD SPECIFIC PROCEDURES REGARDING ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON ANY PARTICULAR MATTER.

THIS WAS WHY THE PARTY WAS NOT ONLY STILL STRONG BUT IT COULD ALSO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT.

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THIS IN A SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE BAGAN SERAI UMNO DIVISION DELEGATES' MEETING HERE TODAY.

HIS SPEECH WAS READ OUT BY THE ASSISTANT INFORMATION HEAD OF UMNO MALAYSIA, HAJI IBRAHIM AHMAD. -- BERNAMA MORE 1423/LK

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DR. MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO THE ACTING UMNO NATIONAL DEPUTY PRESIDENT, STRESSED THAT UMNO MEMBERS SHOULD VALUE THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PARTY'S SUCCESS.

AS SUCH, THEY SHOULD HOLD FAST TO ITS PROCEDURES AND LAWS.

HE DID NOT DENY THAT MEMBERS SHOULD NOT FOLLOW LEADERS WHO WERE NOT FAIR OR SINCERE, BUT THE QUESTION REMAINED TO WHO SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER THE LEADERS WERE SUCH.

+IF JUST ANYBODY CAN MAKE THIS DECISION, AND HE ACTS ACCORDING TO HIS VERDICT, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE SHALL SEE CHAOS, + HE SAID.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID IN A SITUATION WHERE A PARTY WITH MANY LEADERS AND MEMBERS WERE SUBJECTED TO THE WHIMS AND FANCIES OF INDIVIDUALS OR INDIVIDUAL GROUPS, THIS WOULD RESULT IN SQUABLES AND SPLITS WHICH COULD THREATEN ITS VERY EXISTENCE. -- BERNAMA MORE 1427/LK

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→ HE SAID THAT IF UMNO STILL REMAINED STRONG TILL TODAY DESPITE A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP, THIS WAS DUE TO THE EXISTENCE OF PROCEDURES AND THE WILLINGNESS OF MEMBERS TO ADHERE TO THEM.

+IF WE ARE A PARTY DEPENDING ON THE POPULARITY OF A LEADER, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WHEN HE IS NO LONGER WITH US, WHETHER HE WITHDRAWS OR DIES, THE PARTY WILL FALL WITH HIM, + HE SAID.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID AS UMNO HELD STRONGLY TO ITS PROCEDURES, THE LOSS OF A LEADER DID NOT LESSEN ITS STRENGTH.

OLD LEADERS COULD EASILY BE REPLACED BY NEW ONES, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA 1429/LK