

MAHATHIR
BM

84 (P)
KOTA BHARU, MARCH 8, (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TOLD UMNO MEMBERS IN KELANTAN TODAY THAT THEY MUST NEVER ALLOW THE OPPOSITION TO SPLIT THE PARTY.

IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO PAS, HE SAID THE OPPOSITION WOULD EXPLOIT ANY OPPORTUNITY TO CAUSE DISCORD AMONG UMNO MEMBERS TO TRY AND REGAIN POWER IN THE STATE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, ADDRESSING ABOUT 19,000 PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED HIM AT THE SULTAN ISMAIL PETRA AIRPORT HERE, ASKED: "ARE WE WILLING TO GIVE UP KELANTAN WHICH WAS MISMANAGED FOR 18 YEARS (BEFORE BARISAN NASIONAL GAINED POWER IN THE STATE)?

"DO WE WANT TO RETURN TO CONDITIONS OF THE PAST WHEN MOST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FAILED?"

HE SAID THERE WERE UMNO MEMBERS WHO WERE "CONFUSED" BY THE ALLEGATIONS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY BECAUSE IT WAS CLEVER IN DIGUISING ITS MOTIVES. -- MORE 135*/11

MAHATHIR 2 KOTA BHARU

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, SAID THE OPPOSITION MEMBERS ACTED AS THOUGH THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR THE PEOPLE WHEN IN FACT THEY WERE ONLY INTERESTED IN POWER FOR THEMSELVES.

HE SAID THERE WERE WAYS FOR UMNO MEMBERS TO WORK OUT ANY DIFFERENCE THEY MIGHT HAVE. "AND IN THIS WE MUST UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY WHERE THE MINORITY MUST ABIDE BY THE DECISION OF THE MAJORITY."

ONLY BY HOLDING FIRM TO THESE PRINCIPLES COULD UMNO DETERMINE ITS COURSE. "IF EVERYONE OF US INSISTS ON DOING AS HE LIKES, THERE WILL BE NO UNITY, WE WILL NOT SUCCEED IN OUR STRUGGLE."

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID UMNO ALLOWED ITS MEMBERS ALL THE FREEDOM TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS.

"BUT ONCE A DECISION IS TAKEN -- AND TAKEN DEMOCRATICALLY -- IT MUST BE ADHERED TO BY ALL," HE SAID. -- MORE 1451/MK

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MAHATHIR 3 KOTA BHARU

SAYING THAT UMNO EXISTED FOR THE PEOPLE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR URGED THE MEMBERS TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTY'S POSITION AS THE "PILLAR" OF THE RULING COALITION BY FOSTERING UNITY.

HE SAID THEY SHOULD NOT BE EASILY INFLUENCED BY SENTIMENTS AND "SWEET TALK" FROM THOSE WITH "CONCEALED" EVIL DESIGNS. "AND THEY MUST NOT ALLOW ANY STATE TO FALL TO THE OPPOSITION."

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID UMNO'S STRENGTH CAME FROM UNITY. "UNITED, THERE IS NOTHING WE CANNOT FACE."

"WE HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST THE MALAYAN UNION, WE HAVE STRIVED TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE, AND NOW WE ARE STRIVING TO GIVE MEANING TO OUR INDEPENDENCE," HE SAID.

HE SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL BECAUSE UMNO HAD OVERCOME PROBLEMS WITHOUT ANY SERIOUS SPLIT IN THE PARTY. -- BERNAMA 1455/MK