

MAHATHIR-LEADERS
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ALOR SETAR, APRIL 19, (BERNAMA) -- (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) TODAY CRITICIZED SOME UMNO LEADERS FOR BEING SO OBSESSIVE ABOUT THEIR CANDIDACY FOR POSTS THAT THEY STARTED CAMPAIGNING RIGHT DOWN TO THE BRANCH LEVEL THE PAST FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS AND NEGLECTED THEIR DUTIES. THESE LEADERS WERE BUSY GOING IN AND OUT OPENING THE MEETINGS OF THIS BRANCH AND THAT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND THERE ARE THOSE WHO GAVE AWAY GOATS, CATTLE AND WHAT-HAVE-YOU, JUST TO GET VOTES, HE SAID.

+THEY INCLUDE MINISTERS, DEPUTY MINISTERS AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES. WE PAY THEM SALARIES FOR CARRYING OUT THEIR DUTIES BUT THEY MERELY WANT TO BE CANDIDATES, HE ADDED WHEN OPENING THE KUBANG PASU UMNO DIVISION DELEGATES' MEETING NEAR HERE. THE PRIME MINISTER IS HEAD OF THE DIVISION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR FOR THE FIRST TIME OPENLY CAME OUT WITH THE REASON BEHIND THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL DECISION THAT DIVISIONAL MEETINGS BE HELD WITHIN ONLY FOUR DAYS HE SAID IT WAS TO REDUCE POLITICKING AND CAMPAIGNING AMONG UMNO MEMBERS.

PREVIOUSLY, THE DIVISIONS COULD HOLD THEIR MEETINGS AT ANY TIME BEFORE ONE MONTH TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

+WE HAVE DECIDED ON THIS TO PREVENT UMNO MEMBERS FROM CALLING THIS PERSON OR THAT TO CAMPAIGN AND IN THE FOUR-DAY PERIOD, A LEADER CAN AT MOST OPEN EIGHT DIVISIONAL MEETINGS AS HE CANNOT TRAVEL THE WHOLE COUNTRY IN THAT TIME. -- MORE 1800/PA

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+HOWEVER, IT LOOKS LIKE THESE LEADERS ARE SMARTER. THE MEETINGS THAT THEY OPEN, WHICH USED TO BE ATTENDED BY 50 PEOPLE, HAVE NOW BECOME GRAND AFFAIRS, WITH AS MANY AS 3,000 UMNO MEMBERS AS WELL AS OUTSIDERS ATTENDING.

HE SAID THAT THESE LEADERS FELT THAT IF THEY COULD NOT CAMPAIGN IN THE DIVISIONS, EVEN THE BRANCHES WOULD SUFFICE, AND THEY NEGLECTED THEIR MINISTRIES AND STATES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT DIVISIVENESS HAD APPEARED IN THE PARTY WITH LEADERS WHO HAD FORGOTTEN THE BASIS OF UMNO'S STRUGGLE AND WHO INSTEAD STRESSED +I WANT TO BE AN UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBER. +

+I PERSONALLY FEEL FRUSTRATED UNTIL I THOUGHT TO MYSELF WHOEVER WANTS MY POST CAN HAVE IT. BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ARE ANGRY. THEY SAY THAT I SHOULD NOT DO SUCH A THING, HE ADDED, TO THE APPLAUSE OF THOSE PRESENT.

HE URGED ALL UMNO MEMBERS TO REMEMBER THE FACT THAT UMNO SERVED THE PEOPLE AND THAT IT WAS NOT THERE TO HELP GET PEOPLE ELECTED.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD UMNO LEADERS THEY SHOULD REALIZE THAT THEY WERE INSTRUMENTS OF OTHER PEOPLE AND THAT THE PEOPLE WERE NOT THEIR TOOLS. -- MORE 1818/SL

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IN THIS CONNECTION, HE URGED LEADERS WISHING TO CONTEST FOR POSTS AND HOPING TO GAIN NATION-WIDE SUPPORT ADOPT AN OPEN ATTITUDE AND PERMIT OUTSIDERS TO COME AND OPEN THEIR MEETINGS.

WE SHOULD NOT PREVENT OTHER PEOPLE FROM COMING TO OUR AREA IF WE WISH TO CONTEST. IF WE ARE NOT CONTESTING, THEN IT DOES NOT MATTER.

+IF WE WANT DEMOCRACY AND WE WANT OTHERS TO SUPPORT US, WE SHOULD NOT FENCE UP OUR AREA. WE SHOULD NOT HAVE THE ATTITUDE THAT OTHERS SHOULD NOT DISTURB WHAT WE HAVE BUT WE CAN WANT WHAT OTHERS HAVE, HE SAID AGAIN TO THE APPLAUSE OF THE GATHERING.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE LEADERS CONCERNED HAVE CHARGED THAT OTHER PEOPLE WERE UNDEMOCRATIC IF THEY WERE NOT PERMITTED INTO OTHERS' AREAS BUT THEY FORGOT THAT THEY TOO WERE UNDEMOCRATIC AS THEY HAD PREVENTED OTHERS FROM ENTERING THEIR OWN AREAS. -- BERNAMA 1821/SL