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MAHATHIR-BN

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86 (P)
KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 22 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR
MOHAMAD WARNED BARISAN NASIONAL COMPONENT PARTIES TODAY THAT
CAMPAIGNS TO BELITTLE THE BN LEADERSHIP AND OVERCONFIDENCE AMONG
MEMBERS OF THE BN, INCLUDING UMNO, COULD LEAD TO THE BN'S DOWNFALL
IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT IF THE RULING COALITION WERE TO
LOSE IN THE NEXT ELECTION, BASED ON HISTORY, CHANCES OF IT WINNING
IN FUTURE ELECTIONS WOULD BE SLIM AND THE BN MIGHT THEN HAVE TO
CONTINUE BEING THE OPPOSITION.

HE SAID THAT IN THE EVENT OF THE BN'S DEFEAT, THE MALAYS WOULD
LOSE THEIR POLITICAL POWER, ADDING THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT
THE MALAYS SHOULD NOT SUCCUMB TO EMOTIONS IN POLITICAL MATTERS.

THE MALAYS NEEDED POLITICAL POWER SO LONG AS THEY WERE NOT ON
PAR WITH THE OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THE ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL
FIELDS, HE SAID WHEN OPENING THE DELEGATES MEETING OF THE LEMBAH
PANTAI, BATU AND SEPUTEH UMNO DIVISIONS AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE
CENTRE HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALSO BN CHAIRMAN AND UMNO
PRESIDENT, ALSO URGED UMNO MEMBERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE
ALLOCATION OF SEATS, THE LEADERSHIP COULD NOT GIVE ALL
PREDOMINANTLY-MALAY CONSTITUENCIES TO UMNO BECAUSE OVERALL VICTORY
WAS IMPORTANT AND NOT JUST WINNING ONE OR TWO SEATS. -- MORE
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HE ADDED THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE ENVIOUS OF THE SUCCESS OF UMNO AND THE BN WERE USING DIRTY TACTICS IN ATTEMPTS TO ERODE THE CONFIDENCE OF PARTY MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC IN THE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP.

THESE INCLUDED THE ACTION BY AN OPPOSITION PARTY IN DISTRIBUTING A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING HIM DINING WITH THOSE INVOLVED IN THE BMF SCANDAL IN HONG KONG AS WELL AS PAMPHLETS LINKING GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITH ALLEGED CORRUPT PRACTICES.

HE SAID THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN AT A FUNCTION HELD BY BMF WHEN HE VISITED HONG KONG TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS SEVEN OR EIGHT YEARS AGO.

+THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTING THE PHOTOGRAPH HOPE THAT IF THE ELECTION IS HELD, UMNO MEMBERS WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO APPROACH ME AND BELIEVE THAT I WAS INVOLVED IN THE SCANDAL,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID CERTAIN UMNO MEMBERS WHO FELL INTO THE TRAP HAD APPROACHED HIM ASKING HIM TO SACK THOSE ACCUSED OF CORRUPT PRACTICES. HE BELIEVED THAT MANY OTHER PEOPLE COULD BE SIMILARLY INFLUENCED BY THE PAMPHLETS DISTRIBUTED. -- MORE
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THIS SHOWED THAT THE OPPOSITION'S TACTICS, TO SOME EXTENT, HAD AN EFFECT ON CERTAIN UMNO MEMBERS, FENCE SITTERS AND THOSE OPPOSING THE PARTY, HE SAID.

HE SAID MANY MORE PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAMPHLETS WHICH BELITTLED GOVERNMENT LEADERS WERE LIKELY TO BE DISTRIBUTED BY THE OPPOSITION DURING THE ELECTION PERIOD.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE OPPOSITION WAS WELL AWARE THAT THE BN'S LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN THE 1982 GENERAL ELECTION WAS PRIMARILY DUE TO ITS +CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND TRUSTWORTHY+ SLOGAN WHICH IT HAD MADE EFFORTS TO FULFILL SINCE THEN.

HE STRESSED THAT IF THE BN WANTED TO WIN THE NEXT ELECTION, THE MEMBERS MUST CLOSE RANKS AND HAVE TRUST IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP.

THEY SHOULD ALSO NOT BE ARROGANT OR AND EXTREMIST BUT SHOULD MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AND ABIDE BY REGULATIONS, HE ADDED.

ON THE BMF CASE, HE SAID MANY PEOPLE HAD ASKED WHY THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TAKEN ACTION ON IT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT AS THE CASE OCCURRED IN HONG KONG, IT WAS SUBJECT TO THE LAWS OF THE BRITISH COLONY AND HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TRIAL MIGHT TAKE AS LONG AS FIVE YEARS. -- MORE
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HE ALSO REGRETTEED THAT THERE WERE SOME MALAYS WHO WERE WILLING TO CRITICISE THEIR OWN COUNTRY THROUGH FOREIGN MAGAZINES. -- BERNAMA
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