

STICK TO TRUTH, DR M TELLS PARTY LEADERS

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KEMAMAN, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad criticised today certain Umno leaders who "twisted the truth" for their own personal interest and to the detriment of the party.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said that during last year's general election, these leaders spoke positively about Umno, the performance of the Government and its policies and programmes.

"However, for certain reasons, the leaders are now astounding the people by contradicting their statements made last year," he said when opening the Kemaman Umno division's delegates conference this morning.

He said that the people who had believed the statements of these leaders and had helped ensure an Umno victory in the general election were now finding it strange that these leaders had "changed their tune" and were condemning the party leadership.

For example, he said that the leaders alleged now that the prices of Malaysia's commodities had fallen because of the nation's "quarrel with the United States of America" but during last year's general election, these leaders had told the people the reason was the world economic recession and oversupply.

He added that "some people are making illogical statements" that the Government had depressed the price of tin "for some undisclosed reasons" instead of saying that the price had fallen due to the recession.

Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia could not sell its tin because of the substitutes available on the market such as paper, aluminium and plastic.

"Why should we depress the tin price? If the price is high, the Government can get more tax and we can have more allocations for development," he said.

He warned the leaders concerned that the people would not believe in Umno anymore and would withdraw their support for the party if they "persisted in denying and abusing what is true."

Dr Mahathir reminded party members to stick to what they sincerely believed to be true.

"Umno leaders must stick to the truth and must not cheat the people by saying otherwise for self gain," he added.

He also stressed that although Umno practised democracy, party members must also stick to Malay customs and traditions.

"At times, we have to refrain from practising our right according to democracy if we deem that practising the right will destroy us," he said.

Dr Mahathir added: "We must guard ourselves against being carried away in the practice of democracy by instilling Malay customs and tradition in our daily practice."

He said that unity, plus the priority placed on the party's struggle for the Malays, Islam, the nation and the people were the key factors which had ensured victory for Umno in last year's general election.

"We lost certain seats only because of disunity and bickering among Umno members themselves in these areas," he said.

He added that Umno had won easily in areas where unity and solidarity prevailed among party members even though the opposition parties were

strong and had raised various allegations and issues and called for party unity to be safeguarded.

Dr Mahathir also said that Umno being a Malay party, it also had the characteristics, etiquette, customs and traditions of the Malays.

"We must adhere to the traditional Malay customs and etiquette even though Umno is democratic and follows the voice of the majority," he said.

Later, when opening the Bagan division in Butterworth, Dr Mahathir added that some of those involved in back-stabbing the present leadership were "our own friends... friends who were in the frontline in struggling for the party and country."