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KOTA BAHARU, APRIL 17⁸⁷ (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY UMNO AS THE BACKBONE OF THE BARISAN NASIONAL SHOULD ENHANCE UNITY, UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AMONG MEMBERS. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THERE WOULD BE INCREASED COOPERATION AMONG THE OTHER RACES REPRESENTED IN THE BN IF THE MALAYS SET THE EXAMPLE IN UMNO.

SPEAKING TO ABOUT 400 PARTY WORKERS FOR THE BUKIT TUKU STATE BY-ELECTION AT THE UMNO BUILDING HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT AND BN CHAIRMAN, SAID: +IF WE ARE DISUNITED, WE WILL NOT BENEFIT.+

(THE KUALA LUMPUR HIGH COURT ON MONDAY STOPPED THE ELECTION COMMISSION FROM CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS THIS SATURDAY FOR THE BY-ELECTION ON THE APPLICATION OF ENCIK ABDUL FATAH HAJI HARON PENDING THE OUTCOME OF HIS PETITION CHALLENGING THE ELECTION OF THE CONSTITUENCY'S ASSEMBLYMAN, ENCIK ZAKARIA BOTOK, WHO DIED ON MARCH 13.)

(ENCIK ABDUL FATAH WAS THE PAS CANDIDATE FOR THE SEAT IN LAST AUGUST'S GENERAL ELECTION.)

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID ALTHOUGH THE BY-ELECTION RESULT WOULD NOT CHANGE THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT, A VICTORY WAS NECESSARY TO PROVE THAT UMNO WAS STRONG. -- MORE
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HE SAID THE PARTY MACHINERY SHOULD BE REACTIVATED FROM NOW TO ENABLE THE BN TO BE PREPARED FOR THE BY-ELECTION ANYTIME.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED ALL UMNO MEMBERS WOULD SINK THEIR DIFFERENCES AND ENSURE THE BN RETAINED THE SEAT.

HE GAVE AN ASSURANCE THAT SERIOUS ATTENTION WOULD BE GIVEN TO DEVELOPING BUKIT TUKU IF BN RETAINED THE SEAT.

ON THE CANDIDATE FOR THE BY-ELECTION, HE SAID THIS WAS NOT IMPORTANT AS MORE IMPORTANCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ENSURING A BN VICTORY.

+I HOPE THE QUESTION OF WHO SHOULD BE THE CANDIDATE IS LEFT TO ME TO DECIDE,+ HE SAID.

HE WAS CONFIDENT ALL BN COMPONENT PARTIES WOULD WORK HARD TO ENSURE THE VICTORY OF THE BN CANDIDATE. -- BERNAMA
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