

HOW I SELECT MY CABINET MEMBERS: DR M

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UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he did not select members to his Cabinet based on their loyalty to the Prime Minister.

They were selected because they were willing to work and were able to work with other Cabinet members, he said.

And prior to their appointment to the Cabinet, they took two pledges:

- THAT they pledge not to divulge any secrets which they are entrusted with — directly or indirectly — unless with the possible and expressed permission from the Yang di-Per-tuan Agong;

- THAT they pledge to carry out their duties faithfully and they remain loyal to Malaysia and uphold the Constitution.

"There is no mention of loyalty to the Prime Minister. (Loyalty to the Prime Minister) is not one of the conditions to becoming a member of the Cabinet.

"And that is why I will not make that (loyalty) a condition in selecting a person to become a Minister, so long as he can keep secrets and pledges to remain loyal to the country and upholds the Constitution," he said, as he read out the two pledges in full to the delegates.

Dr Mahathir added: "If you look back on the people that I have chosen to the Cabinet since I became Prime Minister, it was not based on their loyalty to me.

"If it was true that I had selected people who were loyal to me, then there will not be an election today," he told the delegates in his adjournment speech and when replying to points raised by delegates from Kelantan, Penang and Pahang at the end of the Umno general assembly.

These delegates, he said, expressed concern over the results and the implication of the results on certain people.

Dr Mahathir said collective responsibility prevailed among Cabinet members and no Cabinet member could distance himself from decisions made at Cabinet level.

"Hence, it is important for a Cabinet member to be able to work with each other.

"I am explaining this so that there will be no confusion over the selection of members to the Cabinet if and when that occurs," he said.

Encik Anuar Musa (Nilam Puri) said during the debate yesterday that in the event of a Cabinet reshuffle, the Prime Minister "will know what to do and we trust that he will include people who are trustworthy and responsible."

He also classified three categories of people eligible to Cabinet posts:

- LOYALISTS who may not be as capable;
- CAPABLE ones who may not be as loyal, and
- LOYALISTS who are also capable.

The Umno president said people took part in contests, fully aware of the risks involved in such challenges.

"We remind ourselves of our stand. We must be aware that if we win, we get

something and that if we lose, we will not get it.

"I myself realised that fairly early and I accepted the fact that in the event that I lost, it was impossible for me to continue living in Seri Perdana and remain as Prime Minister.

"What is the point of someone challenging me only to hand over all the fruits of his labour, if he won?

"It is not a question of envy. It is a matter of principle. We have certain principles when forming the Government and for the government to be effective, we have to have specific work ethics.

"Whether or not the person is loyal to the Prime Minister does not arise at all," he said.