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Mahathir - Politics

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed concern that more people are joining politics for personal gain instead of wanting to serve the people.

He said that it was sad that there should be such an attitude which was a source of weakness and disunity in a party, including Umno.

+Be they in the government or opposition party, many are out for personal gain rather than a desire to serve,+ said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, in his policy speech at the opening of the Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

He said disunity occurred in Umno because of the personal interests of certain people.

There was no real issue confronting the party but an issue was created to promote a personal struggle, he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it was true that politics had drawn the interest of a majority of the people, especially the Malayas, but many seemed to regards politics not as a medium to develop the lot of the people but as a profession which could bring much personal gain. -- more

♥30/11/12-05MST

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He said that Umno had endured and remained strong because it espoused the aspirations of the Malays to become progressive and respected and because it had many leaders who were responsible and sincere.

+However, signs of Umno leaders losing sight of the party's philosophy and struggle are becoming more evident. Tradition, which used to play such an important role in the survival and success of the party, is no longer subscribed to fully.

+Instead, what is being stressed is just democracy or the opportunities offered by the practice of democracy,+ he added.

Democracy alone could not bring success as seen in many countries which practised democracy but are unstable and in chaos, the Prime Minister said.

Democracy, he added, could only bring success if its practitioners knew the limitations of democracy.

In the past, Umno elected its Supreme Council every year and there were no major problems. Now party elections are held once in three years and yet all sorts of ailment afflicted the party, he said. -- more

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+Those contesting sometimes forget about what is good for Umno, being so intent upon winning.

+If in the process the party is destroyed, for them this is alright. This attitude is most saddening,+ the Prime Minister said.

He said the bitter experience which the party had just gone through did not seem to restrain unhealthy practices.

He reminded party members that they should not be obsessive in their support for a particular candidate to the extent of causing disunity each time party elections are held.

+What happens is that the supporters will continue to align themselves with their candidate, regardless whether he won or lost.

+In a situation where there are two candidates, the winning candidate will then get the support of only a portion of the members. And if the losing candidate were to alienate himself, the party will be left with only those who won and thus reduced in size.+ -- more

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Mahathir - Politics 4 Kuala Lumpur

The Prime Minister said that lasting enmity between supporters of winning and losing candidates would create a lot of problems and certainly weaken the party.

+In the end what is left is a party in name only, its strength gone and its struggle ineffective. What is the point of being the leader of a party with a grand name but which loses in an election?+

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the best way to avoid disunity was for all members to close ranks after a contest which should in the first place be gentlemanly with the choice made on the basis of the candidate's track record.

But this would not be possible if during the contest, wild accusations, lies and other unhealthy practices were used.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it would be most sad if the process of changing the party's leadership led to the destruction of the party itself.

He said that the three previous Umno presidents were not challenged not because they were without any weakness but because other leaders then were not prepared to challenge the leadership.

He called on all delegates to place the interest of the party above all else in choosing members of the Supreme Council. -- Bernama

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