

Dr M launches

Tun Mustapha appointed State deputy liaison chief

By Joseph Bingkasan
and Joniston Bangkuai

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. — Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launched Sabah Umno with the pledge that local leaders will eventually have full control of the party in the State.

He also announced the appointment of Tun Datu Haji Mustapha Datu Harun as the party's State deputy liaison chairman to the cheer of some 5,000 Usno delegates and observers attending the party's 23rd annual general assembly at Wisma Muis here.

Dr Mahathir announced the launching of Sabah Umno at 2.40pm after addressing the assembly for an hour and 10 minutes. He simultaneously officiated at Usno's general assembly.

This was immediately followed by the handing over of Umno membership application forms by Tun Datu Mustapha and divisional leaders. Dr Mahathir then presented the Umno flag to Tun Datu Mustapha. The flag was later raised as the Umno song was played.

Dr Mahathir told the audience the appointment of deputy Umno president Ghafar Baba as Sabah Umno's liaison chairman was temporary. It was done to facilitate the formation of the party in the State.

He said while Tun Datu Mustapha would ensure the smooth entry of Usno members into Umno, Encik Ghafar would introduce other Bumiputeras into the party, adding that Umno wanted as many Bumiputeras as possible, including those from PBS, to become Umno members.

Dr Mahathir said Encik Ghafar would be in a position to decide what was best for Umno in Sabah in the initial stages, pointing to the fact that Encik Ghafar had worked hard in the recent general election to help Usno candidates.

He said the appointment of Encik Ghafar to head Sabah Umno for the time being was decided by the Umno supreme council meeting in good faith and was not meant to put Sabah leaders in the back seat.

Dr Mahathir, paying tribute to Tun Datu Mustapha for his untiring devotion to Usno, said he was confident that with the support of former Usno members and other Bumiputeras, Umno would be a strong political party in the State and even stronger in the country.

Dr Mahathir said a stronger Umno would be in a much better position to continue to share power with other Malaysian races for the benefit of Bumiputeras and Malaysians.

In his address, Dr Mahathir praised the history of Umno and the many sacrifices it had made to promote the stability and unity of the country.

He said the history of Malay struggle through Umno was full of sacrifices from the day they decided to dissolve their State and regional associations to form Umno on May 11, 1946.

He added that Umno sacrificed its name when it decided to form the Alliance with the MCA and MIC in the

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early years of the independence struggle.

When Malaysia was formed in 1963, the Malays again sacrificed their identity for the benefit of the country by opting for the name Malaysia instead of Melayu Raya.

With the formation of Malaysia too, the name Persekutuan Tanah Melayu was dropped in favour of the Federation of Malaysia.

He added that all these sacrifices were made because the Malays did not believe in merely holding on to political power.

Instead the Malays, through Umno, believed that power must be used for the good of the country.

He said Usno, which was formed by Tun Datu Haji Mustapha about 30 years ago, would not be dissolved. It would continue to exist as a registered political party.

Dr Mahathir said Usno need not have to be dissolved even though its leaders and members were joining Umno. This was partly to prevent others from "stealing" Usno's name and symbol for political purposes.

The Prime Minister also disclosed that Umno leaders were aware that Parti Bersatu Sabah had been trying to prevent the party from entering the State.

"We know why ... PBS leaders do not want us to see at close quarters what they have been doing since coming to power in 1985," he said.

Sabah Umno