

CNS0609

R PE 07-11 00.185 EA512

aae tbe

Mahathir's successor

MAHATHIR TO LET PARTY DECIDE ON HIS SUCCESSOR

XUALA LUMPUR, Nov. 7 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he was leaving it to party members to decide on his successor.

He did not agree with the suggestion by a journalist that a clear and early indication of his preference of his successor might ensure genuine unity within the party ranks which he had been stressing all this while.

Dr Mahathir said to do that would not only be undemocratic but might even split the party.

+The mere fact of naming my successor is not going to help. It may even split up the party, he said at a press conference at the end of the second day today of the three-day Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said: +In our system it is the members who indicate who and what kind of person they want to choose. We leave it to the members, the Prime Minister said. -- more

▼07/11/19-50MST

aae tbe

Mahathir-successor 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said that as the party president, he could not 'force party members to' unite.

What he could do was merely appeal and reason it out with them.

+If they appreciate the need for unity; they will be unified, he said.

He pointed out that although he spoke a lot on unity, this did not mean that there was no unity now in Umno.

There was definitely unity within Umno but it could be further strengthened, he said.

On a suggestion by a delegate from Selangor during the debate at the assembly earlier that a unity bureau be set up at the party headquarters to promote unity among members, he said he would study the proposal.

However, he pointed out that setting up such a bureau would not guarantee unity. -- more

▼07/11/19-55MST

CNS0614

R PE 07-11 00153 EA514

aae tbe

Mahathir-successor 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

On a call by a Sabah delegate that the government direct Malaysia Airlines (MAS) to reduce its fares to Sabah and Sarawak to promote national integration, Dr Mahathir said that as a company, the airline was responsible to its shareholders.

If the fares were to be reduced, the government would have to subsidise them, he said.

In fact, he added, the government had at one time provided MR5 million a year to promote Feri Malaysia, an issue also raised by the delegate.

However, the service was not popular as many preferred to travel by air to save time.

Dr Mahathir also pointed out that Sabah had sent the largest delegation to the assembly on their own expense.

This showed that the air fare was not a hindrance to travel, he said.

-- Bernama

▼07/11/20-00MST