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Mahathir-polls
PUT UMNO FIRST, DR M TELLS MEMBERS

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JITRA, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Umno members to pick leaders who could bring good to the party and make it stronger and more effective.

They should not use the party elections in November just to secure victory for certain candidates, said Dr Mahathir who is Umno president.

He reiterated his neutral stand of not supporting anyone except the party itself.

Dr Mahathir reminded Umno members to put the party first because only Umno could help them and not certain individuals.

"If you want to choose or vote, think first of what is good and bad for the party and not what is good or bad for this or that person," he said.

The Prime Minister was opening the delegates' conference of the Kubang Pasu Umno division, which he heads, at Dewan Jitra here.-- more

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▼23/09/13-59MST

CNS4293

U PE 23-09 00160 EG204

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Mahathir-polls 2 Jitra

Dr Mahathir said enthusiasm for the coming party elections was not for the good of the party but "to make this or that person win."

In their enthusiasm to secure victory for certain candidates, some party members had acted to the detriment of Umno, he said.

"I don't have to say it...but exposing flaws, hurling all sorts of allegations which the opposition could use to hit us back, these don't benefit the party.

"This should not be done but it is happening now because they want this or that person to win and not to promote the party.

"It is not strange if outsiders or the next person do it but Umno people themselves are doing it just to make sure their candidates win. They run down the party, make baseless accusations, throw money and so on," he said.-- more

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CNS4309

U PE 23-09 00146 EG205

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Mahathir-polls 3 Jitra

He said candidates who secured victory in such a manner only gained an "empty win" because the party which they would lead have been weakened and dissipated.

"What's the use of leading a weak party?" he said.

Dr Mahathir said to him all Umno members are equal and it was up to those eligible to vote to make a choice based on party interests.

He said be they old or young, male or female, all Umno members have the same role in the party.

"I was young once. At that time in Umno, I was irked by the old guards for being slow, dormant and inactive.

"I'm now old but I still want to play a role...but even then if I'm still needed," he said.-- more

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Mahathir-polls 4 Jitra

"We have now deviated from our ideals. We've entered a territory that has nothing to do with our struggle.

"We don't join Umno to fight for the old guards or the young turks. What we should do now is for Umno because Umno is neither old nor young. We won't last but Umno will if it is well-preserved and well looked after.

"It can live for 100, 200 or 1,000 years," he said.

Dr Mahathir reminded party members not to support a certain candidate merely because he was their close friend or because he gave them allocation.

"If we over-idolised a person and could not be bothered with what will happen to the party, then we have digressed from party ideals," he said.-- more

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▼23/09/15-01MST

CNS4341

U PE 23-09. 00154 EG207

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Mahathir-polls 5 Jitra

Dr Mahathir said he was disturbed by talk that election to the Umno supreme council was becoming less important than getting picked as a delegate to the Umno general assembly.

The notion was that a delegate would get a lot of "offers" and be sought after by many people since a delegate has the power to vote, he said.

"I hope no one from Kubang Pasu wants to be delegate to get something in return," he said.

He said one should be a delegate to do a good deed to the party and not to earn something for one self.

"I can't determine who should be a delegate but he must remember that he has a responsibility to the party, that he can vote and decide who wins and who loses," Dr Mahathir said.-- more

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CNS4359

U PE 23-09 00195 EG208

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Mahathir-polls 6 Jitra

Dr Mahathir hoped there was no truth in talk that some groups were out to declare November's Umno general assembly and the party elections unlawful and force a fresh assembly to be held.

"Some people are said to be even planning to do so but I hope this will not happen," he said.

The Prime Minister said it was of not much good for a country to have many but small political parties so much so they could not form the government.

In Malaysia's case, even with Umno being the largest political party, the party on itself could not form the government and had to set up the Barisan Nasional with it being the core component, he said.

The coalition was powerful because it had in Umno a strong and large party which is the BN's pillar of strength, he said.

"As such Umno must be looked after well. A weak Umno will not bring out an effective BN and we will not be able to form an effective government," he said. -- more

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▼23/09/15-38MST

CNS4374

U PE 23-09 00185 EG209

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Mahathir-polls 7 (last) Jitra

Dr Mahathir said while not belittling the role of the other BN components, it was Umno's strength that rallied them around it to cooperate in developing the nation and giving the country respectability.

He also said he could not make spirited speeches nowadays because he was often misquoted or misreported and had his message distorted.

"Some newspapers reported only part of what I said and I'm scared to talk for fear of misinterpretation," he said.

"Sometimes when we say no comment, it is misinterpreted as to mean that we are siding this or that side.

"Even if we don't comment, they would say that from our expression we are siding this or that person. It is as if they can read what's inside people's heart," he said.

Also present were the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Ali and Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff who is also deputy chief of the Kubang Pasu Umno division. -- Bernama

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