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Mahathir-Umno

UMNO MUST REMAIN STRONG TO LEAD GOVERNMENT, SAYS MAHATHIR

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JOHOR BA HARU, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- Umno is the strongest of political parties in developing countries and its members must uphold this position for the government to administer effectively, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Umno president reminded all members of the party to safeguard the position of the party in accordance with Umno's role as the pillar of the ruling Barisan Nasional government.

"An ineffective government is useless, and if the party is weak it will be impossible for the country to continue to remain peaceful," he said when addressing more than 1,000 Johor Umno leaders here.

Dr Mahathir said the major victories of the BN in the general elections thus far showed that Umno's role as the pillar of the BN was effective and therefore the position had to be maintained.

He said the more than two-third majority obtained by the BN in the elections made the government strong and effective.

"Therefore, it does not matter if many people want to leave or even if a party itself wants to get out; the government will remain stable," he said.

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//Mahathir-Umno 2 Johor Baharu

Dr Mahathir reiterated his advice to every Umno member to always give priority to party unity, more so during the general assembly next month to avert a recurrence of the 1987 incident.

He said that in the 1987 party elections, Umno members lost direction when they placed more importance on certain candidates and ignored the party itself.

"While we give prominence to certain leaders in this elections, we must not go to the extent of breaking up the party," he said, adding that the campaign leading up to the assembly should be carried out in a disciplined manner.

Reiterating that he was neutral in the Umno elections this time, Dr Mahathir said he would ensure that the party remained united after the elections.

"I will not take sides because I have the important task of bringing the members together. Usually after an election there would anger and so on. My task will be easier if I remain neutral," he said. -- more

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Mahathir-Umno 3 (last) Johor Baharu

Dr Mahathir also spoke at length on the 10 grassroots votes allotted to each Umno division.

(Candidates for the post of president and deputy president will receive 10 votes from each division that nominates them.)

Dr Mahathir said the system was fair because the ordinary Umno members exercised their voice through the 10 grassroots votes.

However, he said, the general assembly would determine who was wanted by the whole party, whether it was the candidate who had obtained the highest number of nominations or otherwise.

Tonight, Dr Mahathir and his wife will watch a cultural performance at the Tan Sri Haji Hassan Yunus Stadium here, in conjunction with the launching of the Johor-level "Appreciation of Vision 2020" function earlier today. -- Bernama

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11/10/20-14MST