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Mahathir-UMNO

UMNO IS NOT OWNED BY INDIVIDUALS OR TEAMS, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov. 4 (Bernama) -- UMNO President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated that the party belonged to all its members and not any individual or group.

He said: "UMNO's struggle should be for the interests of all its members and not that of individuals or groups.

"We hope there will no longer be any individual or group in the party who can bear to see UMNO destroyed merely because their personal aspirations or aims were not achieved."

Opening the party's general assembly at Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here, the Prime Minister said all party members had the right to determine their leaders in line with UMNO's adherence to the democratic system.

"This means leaders can be changed if the majority of members want it to be so," he added.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that problems during party elections were inevitable and that the higher the posts, the greater the problems. -- more
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Mahathir-UMNO 2 Kuala Lumpur

"However I am hopeful we can resolve the problems and the adverse effects that accompanied the election of party leaders. If UMNO members realise that party interests supersede all others, I am convinced UMNO will always be safe and continue to be strong and progress," he said.

Dr Mahathir's observations regarding party problems were seen by most observers here as referring to the scramble for various important party posts in the assembly today.

Five party stalwarts are vying for the three posts of party vice-president while 54 others are contesting 25 posts in the Supreme Council.

Dr Mahathir said the split in UMNO in 1987 which led to the party being declared unlawful should serve as a lesson to all members not to intensely align oneself to any individual.

"Our loyalty should always be to the party as a strong UMNO will not only safeguard the Malays and Bumiputeras but also other races in the country," he added. -- more

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On his stand in the party elections this time round, Dr Mahathir apologised if he had unwittingly done something which led to speculation that he was not genuinely neutral.

"I believe what I did was for the good of the party and time will tell whether what was done or not carried out by me was really good for the party or not," he said.

He said he realised that however popular a leader was he finally would have to go.

"I will accept whatever party decision on me when the time comes... today it is the turn of others, tomorrow it may be my turn... such is the nature of politics," he added.

He hoped those who lost in the party elections would be prepared to accept the reality as "defeat will not disgrace us."

"What is disgraceful is when we act irrationally because we are angry over our defeat... the honourable among the losers are those who continue to contribute their services to the party," he said. -- more

AM MTA LDB

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Mahathir-UMNO 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir reminded the winners that today was their day but they might fall tomorrow. They should not be too proud and arrogant as "victory is meaningless if we have only half of the party," he said.

"Do not make victory a cause of disunity in the party. Do not think we can grab all and can discard those not together with us because those who lost also have support and still have rights," he added.

He hoped UMNO members would close ranks after the elections and remember that they were not struggling for the success of any individual.

Dr Mahathir said the country needed a capable and efficient leadership, be it in politics or administration, and patriotism to ensure that Malaysia could compete with other countries in development and continue to remain a country that was truly independent.

If all the qualities were not present in an individual, it should at least be possessed among those leading the party and members of the government, he added.

"Leaders must work as a team and not because they are from a team as there is no place for primadonas in the government," he said. -- Bernama

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