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Umno-Mahathir (party)

UMNO UNITY UNAFFECTED BY ELECTION, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the election at this year's Umno general assembly had unaffected party unity.

"Umno is still together and as big and not half of what it is," he said in his closing address at the assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said the party had regained the confidence of the people since the time it was disunited in 1987 and had grown tremendously from 1990 when the Barisan Nasional (BN) won more than two-thirds of the seats in Parliament.

"The growth of Umno has brought back to the fold those members who had left the party following the rift in 1987," he said.

He also said that Umno was for all who believed in its struggle and that only those who had stabbed the party in the back could not be re-accepted.

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JO AZ MGN

▼06/11/19-58MST

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Umno-Mahathir (party) 2 Kuala Lumpur

He said the fact that the election did not cause anyone to suffer "serious injuries" was proof that the party was very strong.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that crises could not be averted at the divisional level owing to differences of opinion which caused rifts among members.

He said there was a need to curb this as it could result in tension and disunity and weaken the party and its leadership.

"If we are weak, we will be colonised directly or indirectly and we will be unable to determine our destiny," he said, adding that this was why the government wanted Malaysia to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

Dr Mahathir also said that though he had won the presidency unopposed, he was conscious of the fact that there might be people who wanted the post to be contested. -- more

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"It is for this reason that I must be cautious. I realise that I cannot be proud of having won uncontested.

"I can only remain (as president) if I can fulfill the responsibilities as the party requires me to, and I will do this to the best of my ability," he said.

On a suggestion that Malays must be rude to achieve progress, Dr Mahathir said this was not necessary.

"We can be firm but not rude because that is not our culture," he said, adding that it was not he who had made the suggestion but Datuk Musa Hitam when he was Umno deputy president.

The prime minister said he regretted that the changes taking place among the Malays were mainly towards negative aspects; such as non-repayment of loans, more so government loans, which he said could result in them not getting any more loans. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said that Malays, for the love of their community, should not resort to such practice as not only they would lose but the community as a whole.

He said Umno was not an enemy of Christians and Jews but "we will be if they look upon us as their foes".

He was commenting on a point raised by a Sabah delegate during the assembly calling on party members to be sensitive on the question of religion because Christians were among the Umno members in Sabah.

The delegate had referred to another who had touched on Christianity when speaking during the debate. -- Bernama

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