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Mahathir-corruption

MONEY POLITICS, CORRUPTION WILL DESTROY THE NATION, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today cautioned the people about the dangers of money politics and corruption which, he said, would destroy the nation and people's prosperity.

The Prime Minister said the two evils would also wipe out all the success the country had achieved in economy, including economic development of the Malays and Bumiputera.

Addressing the UMNO special general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here, he said if allowed to continue and left unchecked, the evils would lead to Malaysia being re-colonised, looked down upon and down-trodden.

"All the benefits and prosperity enjoyed now will disappear and the Malays and Bumiputera will again become a down-trodden and suppressed race, manipulated by others," he added.

The one-day assembly, attended by 1,761 delegates, was held to discuss the issue of money politics and amend the party constitution to check the evil.

Emphasising the importance of the assembly, Dr Mahathir, who is UMNO president, said: "The success or failure of UMNO, the Malays and other Bumiputera and Malaysia, hangs on the decision of, and the practice that will follow, this special general assembly of ours." -- more

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He added: "If we accept money politics in the party, if corruption becomes a culture in UMNO, if our leaders gain position through bribery, we will have a government that is filled with and led by corrupt criminals.

"Can we place our trust in such leaders to rule with wisdom, honesty, sincerity and justice? Can we be confident that the Malays and other Bumiputera will not be sold out by the leaders we pick?"

Dr Mahathir said only the demented would have trust that the rule by corrupt criminals would bring happiness to the country and people.

He issued a reminder that UMNO's leadership of the party and the world respect for the Malay race as well as successful achievement of the vision to make Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020 depended on the eradication of money politics in UMNO.

"I hope we will not only approve the constitutional amendments today but we will sincerely pledge to abide by them, practice its noble values and make a success of the enforcement of the law," he said. -- more

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In his speech, lasting 40 minutes, Dr Mahathir also listed the consequences that corruption and a corrupt society would bring which would eventually prevent the society from developing and making progress.

He said corruption was contagious and could become part of the culture of society if no determined efforts were made to check it.

"When it becomes a culture, it cannot be eradicated anymore," he added.

This was because the places for redress and those charged with the responsibility to eradicate corruption would be made up of people who openly practised corruption.

He said there might be people who truly refused bribes but they would become victims of a corruption-riddle society which would hurl all sorts of accusations against them. -- more

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He added, however, that it was not easy to eradicate corruption completely. "I realise that lecturing alone will not produce a noble society."

In this age, there were many people who were inclined to defend criminals and wrong-doing, he said.

On the money politics problem in UMNO, Dr Mahathir said it occurred because UMNO held power and power could corrupt.

"Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," he added.

He said the combination of the luxury of money among Malays and Bumiputera with the power they held moulded morals that were declining.

He reminded the people, especially UMNO members, to use the system of democracy wisely and avoid being influenced by money politics.

He said: "Through our votes we can decide our fate and that of our nation. The vote is a huge capital for those who do not have riches.

"It is a leveller between the poor and the rich, the weak and the strong." -- Bernama

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