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Mahathir-Corruption

CORRUPT PRACTICES LEAD TO DESTRUCTION, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has again reminded Umno members that corrupt practices which start from a contest for posts in Umno can destroy the party, the nation, race and religion.

He said that among the impacts of corrupt Umno leaders were that government policies, especially those related to Malay and Bumiputera interests would be set aside, investors would move out, job opportunities would not increase but would be reduced, poverty would be rampant and the economy would not grow.

"The whole Malay and Bumiputera society will collapse. Our race will collapse. This nation will revert to its former situation of poverty, chaos and instability. The hope of the Malays and other Bumiputeras to become a developed race will be dashed.

"The foreigners, especially those who continually alleged that the Malays as Muslims could never progress and be a successful and developed race, will laugh at us. And all this because of the selection of corrupt candidates to lead Umno," he said when opening the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that a nation that accepts bribery as its culture may never progress and in the event, the development of the Malays and the Bumiputeras could no longer be carried out.

"If this happens, all government dealings will cease to function and all costs will escalate.

"Nothing will be exempted from bribery. Licences, AP's and approvals require bribes. Dealings with the private sector, such as banks, require specific payments to those who are in position to approve," he said.

In the context of the party election at the general assembly, Dr Mahathir said that those who from the beginning had shown negative traits and offered bribes to seek position and without any qualms misused power and opportunity in furthering himself, would certainly be more willing to be bribed after having attained high position and becoming leaders.

"Leaders who resort to bribes to seek support will not hesitate to accept bribes to support or to approve anything," he said.

Stressing that a corrupt leader would set up a corrupt government, the Prime Minister said that corrupt leaders would not stop at only returning the favour of those who helped them.

"Sooner or later they will want to enrich themselves by selling their power and influence. Agents have to be paid," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that for every favour granted, there were tens, hundreds or even thousands of others who did not get anything.

"And these people will be disappointed and would reject the party when the time comes to elect representatives to Legislative Assemblies. What is the use of being a leader of a defeated party?," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that there were those among Umno members who felt that power was of no use if it could not be used to help friends or family, or supporters and party members.

"To them it is not wrong. To them this is an act of repayment. According to them since they gave the support, they should now be compensated. Besides, what is given does not belong to the minister but to the government.

"Power that is subjected to rules is not power, so it appears. To these

people power means the right to do anything. If it can only be used according to the rules, then that is not power, they say," the Prime Minister said.

As such, he said, today we have seen how the cost of electing the Supreme Council had escalated to the extent that the hotel status for delegates had to be upgraded to five stars if support were to be given.

"It is not the performance of the person's ability that is the basis for selection. What determines support is the value of the bribe that one is willing to give," he said.

As a result, he said, leaders who abuse their positions and were corrupt would lead Umno and become government leaders and such leaders were no different than those who take drugs because when addicted, the dignity of the race and the nation would be sold to anyone.

Dr Mahathir said that in the beginning, bribery would be discreet but government servants, aware of these abuses, would threaten that they too should be bribed.

"Finally, those in authority and those without authority but aware of the corrupt practices of those in authority, will become corrupt. Since everyone is involved, no one will feel ashamed. Everyone will accept bribes. Bribery will be condoned. Bribery will be openly practised and its culture may penetrate at all levels of society," he said.

"It is difficult to visualise something that has yet to happen. But believe me what I have tried to portray can happen. To some extent it has already happened. Government's power has been used to buy support," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that no other means were more effective to destroy a nation and race than to choose leaders who abuse their position and were corrupt because leaders, be they kings, presidents or dictators, were those who had destroyed their glorious empires in the history of mankind.

Umno, he said, must be led by leaders who are of high calibre, with quality, incorruptible and do not place their personal interests above others.

He said that Umno leaders must be made up of those committed to fighting for reforms which had been pioneered and willing to make sacrifices for the love of their nation, culture and religion.

The Prime Minister said the view that there was no difference between one leader and another as development would be achieved irrespective of whoever is the leader, was incorrect. -- BERNAMA

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