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Mahathir-S46

MAHATHIR SAYS UMNO CAN HANDLE ENTRY OF S46 MEMBERS

KUALA TERENGGANU, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- Umno can handle on its own whatever problems that may arise from the entry of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) members after the party is dissolved in October, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister, who is Umno president, said Umno had been able to manage its affairs all this while and did not need advice from other parties.

"I can handle (this problem), we can handle it and members of Umno can handle," he said at a news conference after laying the foundation stone for the Taman Permint Perdana housing scheme at Kampung Batin, Seberang Takir, here today.

He was responding to a question on the statement by the Kelantan Menteri Besar's press secretary Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh yesterday that the entry of S46 members into Umno would not bring any benefit and might burden Umno.

"We don't need their (PAS) advice. If there is a need, we will take him as a consultant," he quipped.

He added: "(If a S46 member) becomes a thorn in the flesh, we will pull it out and throw it away together with other thorns."

Asked to elaborate on his statement yesterday that S46 members who joined Umno should not create a faction in the party, Dr Mahathir said it was not a warning but a normal condition applicable to anyone who became a member of Umno.

"Anyone who wants to join Umno must from the outset abide by the conditions. There cannot be factions in Umno," he said.

He pointed out that Umno was damaged in the past because of the existence of Team A and Team B.

Asked whether S46 decided to dissolve and allow its members to join Umno because it had no other option, Dr Mahathir said S46 members might have their own reasons but if they placed priority on their personal reasons, they would not last as members of Umno.

Asked about calls to bring forward the Umno general assembly scheduled in October since there was no campaigning for the party elections, he said he also favoured holding the assembly sooner but this could not be done because of logistical problems.

"I too would like to have it (the general assembly) a little sooner but to say there is no campaigning, that I do not believe. I have received a different report, there is campaigning...some use money...I know," he said.

He said disciplinary action would be taken against members involved when enough evidence was obtained.

Umno could stop such unhealthy campaigning if the members reported it or refuse to vote the people involved, he said.

"We don't want people like these to become leaders," he added.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir launched the Taman Permint Perdana project which is being developed by the Terengganu Economic Development Corporation (Permint).

The project, covering 56 hectares, will provide 932 units of housing including 415 low-cost houses. The first phase is estimated to cost RM63.13 million. -- BERNAMA

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