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Mahathir-Umno

UMNO MEMBERS TOLD TO PREPARE FOR MORE INTENSE CHALLENGES

KUALA LUMPUR, May 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has told Umno members to be ready to face more intense challenges ahead being a party that manifests the aspirations of the country and people.

"We must be able to compete with other peoples who are more progressive and seize our rights," said the party president and Prime Minister.

Being a party at the helm of the government's administration, Umno must play a positive role to ensure the people from all strata of society, particularly the Malays, are prepared to face the future with mental and spiritual strength, he said in his message published in the souvenir programme for the party's 50th anniversary celebration on Saturday.

Dr Mahathir wants the Malays to master knowledge in every field and adapt themselves to all situations and changes taking place around them.

"Today, in celebrating our party's 50th anniversary, let us renew our determination to defend our party's supremacy in leading the people towards achieving a vision that promises an excellent life in the new era ahead," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the 50th anniversary coincides with the renaissance of the Malays.

He said Umno has proved the Malays possess moral and spiritual strength to progress but they must not be content with what they have achieved so far.

"Our challenge now is to capitalise on the country's excellent performance as the base to attain supremacy of our people, country and religion in the next century," he said.

Being the oldest political party, he said, Umno has weathered many challenges including some which threatened its existence.

"The country's well-being and its excellent performance are due to the sacrifices, struggles and tireless work of our former leaders from the time of Datuk Onn Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahmah Putra Al-Haj, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn until now," he said.

The generation of Malays who have achieved progress and success in every sector are reaping the fruit of the struggles and vision of past Umno leaders, he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno has retained its influence and credibility as a party which paved the way for the progress and development of the country as a democratic and just society.

"From the start, Umno has been struggling for the vision that the country's future hinged on racial harmony, mutual understanding and respect for the multiracial people with diverse culture and religious beliefs," he said.

"Now, Malaysia, their homeland, is peaceful, harmonious and developed. Malaysia is now an exemplary multiracial country with its people living in peace and enjoying a prosperous life.

"This is Umno's achievement which we are proud of. The success spurred us to proceed with the country's development to have a harmonious Malaysian race in future," he said.

He said allegations by certain groups that the Umno formed in 1946 championed the cause of Malays but that the present Umno withdrew special privileges accorded to them were merely distorting reality and the truth.

"There is no difference whatsoever between the present Umno and that of the past as it still pursues the same objectives and aspirations for the

future of the Malays," he said.

In fact, the struggles and aspirations of the present Umno are broader to bring the Malays to greater heights of success which have not been dreamt of by past Umno leaders, he said.

Umno is indebted to the former leaders as, with their wisdom to lead Umno, all challenges faced by the Malays have been weathered successfully, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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