

17 AUG 1997

Mahathir-Sabah

HIGHEST MEMBERSHIP PROOF OF UMNO'S ACCEPTANCE IN SABAH, SAYS PM

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- Sabah Umno's membership of 350,000, the highest among all states, shows that the party is increasingly accepted by Bumiputeras in Sabah, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

However, as the newest state Umno liaison, Sabah Umno should learn from the experience of the party at the national level, the Prime Minister and Umno president said.

"Normally the young learns from the old and this is not something unusual but something that is regarded as natural. We learn from people with more experience, more knowledge," he said when opening the Sabah Umno Convention here.

Dr Mahathir said Umno spread its wings to Sabah in February 1991 only after it felt that its presence in the state was important following several political events in the state then.

"We don't need to mention the reason, but in view of the situation then which was almost like the Emergency, we felt it will be good if Umno broke tradition and went to Sabah," he said.

Umno initially had no intention of expanding to Sabah because there already were Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties representing the Bumiputeras in the state but "in view of the situation, we had to establish Umno in Sabah", Dr Mahathir said.

"It is evident that the response had been very good, and with a membership of more than 350,000 it shows that the Muslim Bumiputeras and non-Muslim Bumiputeras welcome Umno's presence," he said.

After opening the convention, Dr Mahathir who is also BN chairman, held a closed-door meeting with the leaders of BN component parties in the state.

The Prime Minister later declared open Hotel Promenade here, and in his speech he said the country's economy would continue to expand rapidly as long as there was political stability.

He said many people were envious of the country's fast development with some wanting to see a slowdown in the pace apparently to avoid the economy from getting overheated.

Dr Mahathir urged hotel operators to redouble the efforts in upgrading their service to tourists until their standard was regarded as among the best in the world.

He said it was wrong to assume that tourists came only once and therefore there was no need to provide good service, because if proper service was not given they would tell their friends not to come here for a visit. -- BERNAMA

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