

21 FEB 1998

Mahathir-PPP

DISCARD THE NOTION THAT POSITIONS CAN BRING WEALTH, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that members of Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties should discard the notion that positions in the party can create opportunities to secure wealth.

"If members are constantly at loggerheads because they believe that positions in the party can bring huge benefits, the party will suffer in the end," he said when opening the annual general meeting of the People's Progressive party (PPP) here.

Dr Mahathir said that this unfortunate situation would become even worse if leaders were to favour their supporters for certain positions.

He said that changes in leadership should be conducted in an orderly manner and with much wisdom as a position in any party comes with it heavy responsibilities and duties.

The Prime Minister said that there may be many people who could secure positions but could not meet expectations and this would make an election meaningless.

"We cannot deny that there are times when leaders need to be changed but changes should be conducted properly and wisely.

"Changes in leadership should be, like the Malay saying goes, menarik rambut dalam tepung (pulling out a strand of hair from a container of flour), with the container of flour still left in the same condition. What is the point of having a new leader who is supposed to be better if the party he is going to lead has been destroyed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that parties constantly involved in internal squabbles would lose sight of their struggles.

"What are struggles if winning or losing in a party election leads to failure of the party to attain its goals," he said.

The Prime Minister said the notion that positions in a party could create opportunities to secure wealth could destroy the government, the party and the nation.

He advised all members of the BN component parties to always be on guard when choosing their leaders.

"Choose those who could lead us towards betterment and not those seeking personal gains. Remember that working or serving in a party is a struggle requiring immense sacrifices.

"We should not hope to be rewarded because we may be disappointed when our hopes are not fulfilled," he said.

The Prime Minister also said that party problems could not be solved based on provisions of the law.

He said that if the law determines a party leadership but the line-up fails to get majority support, it would lack authority.

Dr Mahathir said that the law could determine the lawful or unlawfulness of a political party, but if the majority of the members still uphold the party, it would negate the decision based on law.

"Remember that political parties exist because of the preparedness of members to accept the party as a toll of their struggles. But if the interest of leaders overrides such struggles, support for the party will wane and leaders will be left without a party to lead," he said.

Dr Mahathir was happy that the PPP had progressed and was capable of overcoming its problems.

He hoped that the PPP's leadership problems would not recur.

"If BN component parties are weak, then the government will be weak. Due to such weakness, we could again be colonised," he said.

He said that internal problems in the BN component parties should be solved wisely.

They should not wash dirty linen in public as they each had their own mechanism to deal with problems, he said.

"This approach is vital to ensure that the BN is not only seen as being strong but is actually strong. Personal interests should be set aside. Personal glory which results in the destruction of the party is meaningless. With the destruction of the party, we will be destroyed too," he said.

Commenting on the current economic crisis in the country, Dr Mahathir said that the depreciation of the ringgit brought so much problems but Malaysians were fortunate as the situation in the country had remained calm.

"In fact, if social unrest and political riots were to take place following the economic crisis, the situation will be cited as the reason for the worsening economic situation.

"And as such, all quarters will forget that the economic crisis started because of the depreciation of the currency caused by foreign factors," he said. -- BERNAMA

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