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`Don't be obsessed with individuals'

WITH Umno elections six months away, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday cautioned its members not to be obsessed with individuals and not to go overboard in seeking victory for their candidates.

The Prime Minister added that contests for party posts should also not be dictated by personal loyalty and that democracy in the party must not be at the expense of party credibility.

He said party elections should be based on the character of the candidates, their ability to perform and other leadership qualities.

"The question of loyalty must not influence the elections," he said at the outset of an extraordinary general meeting.

Dr Mahathir said some might feel that their candidates were so good that their failure would lead to the downfall of the party.

However, if their bids would wreck the party, it would be pointless to sacrifice the party to such an obsession, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was important that those campaigning for their candidates not go overboard.

And if their candidates were not successful, they should accept the ones chosen by the majority, close ranks, forget any tension that prevailed during the elections and focus on achieving party objectives.

"Remember, in politics there are no permanent friends, there are no permanent enemies. There is no certainty that we are going to support the same candidates in future elections. We have a proverb which says sekali air bah, sekali pantai berubah (the shore will change according to the tide)."

Dr Mahathir argued further: "The party is important. Individuals are not. Individuals come and go but the party remains for much longer. The struggle will not end if the individuals fail. But the struggle will end if the party is destroyed."

Amendments to the party constitution, among others, abolished the 10-point bonus vote accorded to every nomination for the posts of president and deputy president, and instead required candidates to secure stipulated percentages of nominations from the divisions, which now total 165.

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