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Mahathir-Leader

ELECT A LEADER FOR HIS QUALITIES, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the election of a leader should be based on the candidate's character, his capabilities and other attributes qualifying him as a leader.

He said that the question of loyalty to the candidate as an individual or a leader of a certain faction should not be taken into account and influence the election.

"If the election is not based on loyalty of the individual or faction, then after a leader has been elected, the party should be able to close ranks," he said at the Umno special general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

The special general assembly was held to amend the party's constitution, among others, to curb money politics and to consolidate the party's structure in the run-up to the Umno election in June next year.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, also said that a leader who was elected should be given full support as it was the only way to ensure his integrity and that of the organisation he leads.

In fact, he said, the leader should be given support for as long as he was a leader.

"Loyalty and devotion to him should not be because of his physique, because of his personality. Loyalty to him should be because of his post, the post held by him in accordance with the party's constitution and the party election.

"If he fails to maintain the party's confidence in him, then he could be removed from the party, also in accordance with the party's constitution," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded members of the danger of the practices of cronyism and factionalism in the party.

"Cronyism and factionalism should not exist in the party. If practised, the party will eventually disintegrate and become weak," he said.

He said that following a victory of a faction, support would be withheld by the defeated faction and as such, the winner would only obtain the support of only part of the party and would therefore become weak,

Dr Mahathir said that the true culture of democracy calls for an election to be held in a friendly manner.

He said that election among parties in an election was different from a party election.

"In a party, emphasis should be placed on the party's integrity, the party's effectiveness. Victory as a leader is meaningless if he causes the party to disunite, become weak, fail to win elections and form governments," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if the election of a leader was not based on personal loyalty, then there would not be enmity by the defeated party against the elected leader or his supporters.

"Instead, all party members will close ranks and provide solid support to the elected leader. As such, the party will remain strong and able to deal with problems faced by the party, the government and the nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Umno members should establish a culture where party interest and not the interest of certain candidates was given priority.

"There may be some who feel that their candidate is so good that if he fails, then the party will fail.

"It may be true. But if in a bid to ensure victory for the candidate the party is sacrificed, then obsession for the candidate is counter-productive.

"The important thing is that we are not too obsessed to ensure a win for our candidate and if he fails, then we should be prepared to accept the candidate which is elected by the majority," he said.

He said that after an election, members must close ranks and ensure there were no rifts that would allow enemies to take advantage.

Dr Mahathir said that tensions in an election should be set aside and efforts concentrated in ensuring the party's struggles.

"Always remember that in politics, friends are not forever and enemies are not permanent," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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