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Mahathir-Candidates

BN MEMBERS MUST ACCEPT THE PARTY'S CANDIDATES, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that members of the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties must close ranks and give their support to candidates decided by the party to be fielded in the coming general election.

"Don't think of who the candidates are...regard them as candidates of the BN," said Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, when launching the BN Wanita motivational camp, here.

The prime minister called on members to support the candidates decided by the BN irrespective of whether they were from Umno, MIC, MCA, Gerakan and other component parties because the main task of members was to ensure victory for the party.

"We have to close ranks. Join forces when a decision has been made. Disappointment, anger should be cast aside...we have to give priority to the party and not personal feelings," he said.

Dr Mahathir said no doubt it would be difficult to decide the candidates for the coming general election but once a decision had been made, it should not be disputed.

"We subscribe to a cooperation concept which has been proven since 1952 in the KL municipality election when the Alliance won following the support and cooperation between Umno and the MCA," he said.

He said that the BN had also been successful in preserving harmony in terms of the various races, languages and religions and the party is also not gender bias.

"PAS...they are forever dividing people but we are forever uniting people," said Dr Mahathir.

"BN is not a fly by night operator, setting up a pact only for an election. Ours is not a contract marriage, our marriage is a permanent marriage," he said.

At a news conference later, Dr Mahathir said that the BN had not held any meeting to decide on the candidates to be fielded in the coming general election and the allocation of seats unlike the opposition parties which were now fighting among themselves for seats.

Dr Mahathir also said that Bumiputera students were not doing so well in their studies lately compared to previous days when they used to register good results.

"They are demonstrating and we shall see whether they do well in the exams," he said.

He said the students were interested in telling the government how to run the country but then, first, they must pass the exams.

Yesterday, at Alor Setar, Dr Mahathir said Bumiputeras are now left way behind the other races who are more successful and that the growth of the nation may be stunted by this attitude of the Bumiputeras.

He said the Bumiputera students had been side-tracked and never study, and are involved in activities which do not require one to be educated.

-- BERNAMA

SHO RM