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PM: There shouldn't be any personal loyalty

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Prime Minister said today the people should not support him on a personal basis but because he is the leader of a party and Government that are striving to develop the country.

"There should not be any personal loyalty. Or else, if I were to leave Umno or the Government, you (supporters) will have to follow me," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said at a meet-the-people session in Taman Keramat that concluded his two-day working visit to Selangor.

Expressing his gratitude to the people who turned up in the thousands to greet him on his arrival and the shouts of "Hidup Mahathir" (Long Live Mahathir), he said extending the right form of support was important as some people tended to "worship" their leaders.

"We support someone because he is the leader of a party and not because of the person...if he `jumps' into the ravine, we do not have to follow his act."

Citing the leadership and administration of the country's three former Prime Ministers, he said they had received the right kind of support from the people as attested by the smooth transfer of power.

Dr Mahathir said leaders were useful when they adhered and subscribed to the party's struggle.

"Do not practise blind obedience to a leader until we cannot see his weaknesses."

Alluding to his former deputy, Dr Mahathir said after being sacked from the party, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim turned against Umno which had given him the opportunity to climb to the top.

This showed he was acting out of self-interest. He was also now criticising the Barisan Nasional Government as being cruel and unjust but had chosen to remain quiet when in office.

This showed how important it was to choose leaders who were committed to the party's struggle and interest of the nation.

Dr Mahathir said Umno was set up to serve the country and not because it disliked or wanted to ruin other parties, unlike the Opposition such as Pas.

He said Pas' agenda was not to develop the country but to topple the BN Government and teach its members to hate Umno, such as labelling the party as being less Islamic.

"What right do they have to say that? What is their aim? The answer is to instil hatred among their followers against the Government and its leaders."

Dr Mahathir later witnessed a pledge of loyalty to the Prime Minister and the Government from all BN MPs and State Assemblymen in Selangor led by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar.

The Prime Minister also handed over land titles to residents of Kampung Sg Sering, Kg Melayu Sri Kundang and Ampang Campuran and keys to squatter families from Kg Banjar in Gombak who were given low-cost units in Taman Bolton.

At a Press conference later, elaborating on his call for the people not to practise personal loyalty, Dr Mahathir said he felt indebted to Umno because he would not be the Prime Minister or receive support from the people if not for the party.

He said Selangor Umno was ready to face the general election anytime.

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