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Mahathir-Umno

CONDITIONS FOR FORMER OPPOSITION MEMBERS TO JOIN UMNO TO BE TIGHTENED

KUALA LUMPUR, June 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the procedure for former opposition party members to join Umno will be tightened to ensure that only those who are loyal and accept the principles of Umno's struggle are accepted.

The Umno president said Umno did not want a recurrence of the tragedy in which some people joined the party solely to "climb to the top" and did not have any loyalty to Umno and its struggle.

"We have to be more careful now of the kind of people we accept into the party," he told reporters after opening Universiti Tenaga Nasional in Serdang, near here.

He said this when asked whether Umno was prepared to accept former leaders and members of Parti Keadilan Nasional including its vice-president, Marina Yusoff, who left the party because of alleged differences with Keadilan deputy president Chandra Muzaffar recently.

Dr Mahathir said that before accepting former opposition party leaders or members Umno must know their reasons for wanting to join Umno.

"If they want to join Umno because they believe in its struggle and principles, we will accept them," he said.

Asked about the dispute between Marina and Chandra as reported in the media, Dr Mahathir said it was now clear that Chandra himself was a dictator.

"I'm not surprised or shocked at what happened in Keadilan, especially with Chandra who wants to impose his will on the whole country. Now that he's a leader of a political party he has the chance to show his ability but now it's clear that he's inclined towards dictatorship.

"He accuses people of being dictators but he himself is a dictator. Now he has the chance to lead and he wants to show his stripes," he said.

On Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat's suggestion that there be a separate restaurant for Muslims and non-Muslims, Dr Mahathir said it would only divide the people.

"Yes, we have separate restaurants for Muslims and non-Muslims, I think people wearing the white caps must be separated from those wearing black caps ... this will not bring people together," he said.

Nik Aziz made the proposal in support of the Selangor Religious Affairs Department's (Jais) arrests of 25 Muslims at "The Ship" restaurant, Petaling Jaya, last week.

Nik Aziz had said that in Kelantan, Muslims were not allowed to visit restaurants which served pork and alcohol.

-- BERNAMA

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