

03 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Puteri

BE MINDFUL OF ACTIONS, PUTERI UMNO TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has told Puteri Umno that while struggling for the party it should be careful about its actions so that others cannot find fault with the movement.

"Malaysians are watching your (Puteri Umno's) movements and many are trying to spot your weaknesses. Therefore, it is important for Puteri Umno to be mindful of its movements," he said when officially launching the four-month-old Puteri Umno before more than 5,000 members of the movement here tonight.

He advised the movement's members not to do anything that could tarnish its image.

"We want Puteri Umno to form many branches. Don't let Umno Youth set up branches among the Puteri. One branch is all right...but not the second, third and fourth," he said in a lighter vein.

His remark was met with laughter by the capacity audience at Dewan Merdeka, the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

Dr Mahathir also reminded Umno Youth to help protect the good image of Puteri Umno.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Puteri Umno members to understand Umno's struggle because there were still people who joined the party without understanding its struggle.

"Remember, we join the party for only one purpose, that is to save the race, religion and country," he said, adding that he was confident Puteri Umno would live up to the expectations of all Umno members.

"A post is not for decoration or for oneself but is for the party's struggle. Our struggle is not to become leaders but to develop the race, religion and country through Umno," he said.

He advised Puteri Umno to organise courses for its members to ensure that everyone who joined the movement was clear about what she should do for the party.

The Umno president also urged Puteri Umno members to register as voters and to go out and cast their ballots during elections, including by-elections.

Likening himself as a grandfather giving advice to his grandchildren, Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno should refrain from making attempts to remove anyone or to run down certain individuals.

"Don't send poison-pen letters to the (party) president and complain about this leader and that leader. Now is not the time (for making complaints). Now is the time to consolidate the Puteri movement," he said.

He also said Puteri Umno was formed at a critical time when it was claimed that Malays were losing interest in the party and instead were indulging in non-beneficial activities.

"It is said that the younger generation is not keen on Umno while the older group has been influenced (by the opposition) and they feel that Umno is no longer relevant.

"But tonight we can see whether it is relevant or not. This hall is packed and if anyone still insists that it is not relevant, I call on them to come and look at the TV. It is obvious that many women below 35 years old wish to remain with Umno," he said.

In her speech, Puteri Umno pro tem chief Azalina Othman Said said the movement now has more than 84,000 members.

Also present were Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, vice-presidents Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib, secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz.

-- BERNAMA

NZ NZ YBY