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Mahathir-Umno

PM SAYS HE IS NO MIND-READER

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he has provided opportunities to everyone to join in the struggles of Umno and never envisage that some of them will eventually use the party for their own interest or the interest of their respective groups.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that he had accepted back into the party many people who were at one time in enmity with him and among them there were those who were truly sincere in pursuing the struggles of the party.

He said: "But among them there will surely be those who were insincere and I wouldn't know. I cannot read what are in their minds.

"As such, I just accept them with the hope that when they are in Umno, they'll show their loyalty to Umno and will pursue the party's struggles. As it turned out, there were people who used Umno for their own interest and in the interest of their group."

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after opening the Tamil Internet Conference and Exhibition 2001 at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He was asked to comment on the statement by Parliamentary Secretary to the Information Ministry Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin yesterday that Dr Mahathir's biggest mistake was to bring into Umno revolutionary elements who fail to embrace the spirit of the party.

Zainuddin was reported to have said that the prime minister therefore had to pay a very high price for his political mistake.

Dr Mahathir said that he is only human and cannot run away from doing something which may eventually turn out to be a mistake.

"From one aspect, I may be wrong...I only provide an opportunity to everyone including Umno's enemies to join Umno, to pursue Umno's struggles and develop our nation," he said.

Asked whether this kind of opportunity would in future be withheld, Dr Mahathir said: "How are we to know that when a person joins Umno, we can say that 15 years later he'll turn out to be a traitor. We cannot tell.

"There are times when a person leaves Umno, joins another party, then rejoins and they say that they will be loyal. We cannot read people's minds. We are only human...if nothing crops up we'll never know," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the reported dissatisfaction of Umno members who were dealt with by the party's Disciplinary Board for violating the code of ethics during the divisional elections last April.

He said that they have the right to question the decision made by the Board and their appeals should be channelled through a committee set up by Umno for the purpose.

"Everybody says he is not guilty. If the appeals board find that there is a case, we'll confirm it.

"But, if there are doubts, suspicions or maybe inadequate evidence and things like that, we'll have to take them into account. We have to be fair to everyone," he said.

Asked to comment on the activities of the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM), Dr Mahathir said the government felt that there was a need for a "white paper" to explain to the people on the actual situation.

"We feel there is a need but we are facing problem like I've said. The case will be brought to court...if we provide details of the case, it may be taken as an attempt to influence the court," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was aware that the people were now confused over the matter, more so following the opposition's allegation that it was a "sandiwara" (drama) staged by the government.

"Even if there are people killed, they'll still say it is staged. To them, killing people is still a drama...it's so easy for them to say, everything is staged," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this showed that the opposition was bankrupt of ideas in explaining matters that arise.

"It goes to show how stupid they are. They can't even argue their way out beyond saying sandiwara," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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