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Mahathir-Struggle

SELFISH LEADERS MAKING PEOPLE HATE UMNO, SAYS MAHATHIR

TANAH MERAH, April 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the practice among some Umno leaders and members to struggle just for their own interest and that of certain individuals is weakening the party.

It had resulted in splits within Umno and caused people to dislike the party, said the Umno president.

People hate Umno because of such practice in the party and not because of Umno's struggles to defend the race, religion and nation, he said at a meeting with Umno branch and divisional leaders within the Tanah Merah and Jeli divisions.

Present was Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob and Kelantan Umno chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

Dr Mahathir said such selfish leaders and members would do anything to ensure their interests were not affected.

He said some branch leaders prevented young and educated people from becoming members as they feared such members posed a threat to their positions.

"What will become of our party if the young are not accepted while we go on getting older. In the end, we will be old and Umno too will be old. We will all be dead unless one really thinks he will be there forever," he said to loud applause from those present.

The Prime Minister said such selfish leaders were also prepared to accept and give bribes, ultimately destroying the party.

He said support for Umno also dropped when leaders resorted to leaving the party along with supporters upon failing to get renominated to their posts.

They often choose to join other parties but this would not bring any benefit to the religion, race and nation, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the weakness in Umno caused by the actions of selfish leaders had been taken advantage of by opposition parties which allegedly spread various lies to get people to hate Umno.

"If there are no wrongdoings within the party, they (opposition parties) could not have made accusations against Umno, a party that has contributed a lot to the religion, race and nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir asked Umno members to view the opposition parties' alleged actions seriously.

Party leaders and members should return to Umno's original struggles to fight for the religion, race and nation, he said.

The party president believed that if Kelantan Umno adhered to the original struggles of Umno, it could wrest the state from PAS in the coming general election.

Dr Mahathir later exchanged greetings with the branch and divisional leaders before leaving for Kota Baharu on a helicopter.

--BERNAMA

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