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Mahathir-Umno

THE ABUNDANTLY RICH TO BE BARRED FROM CONTESTING FOR POSTS, SAYS PM

JITRA, April 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the abundantly rich will be barred from contesting for important posts in the Umno branches and divisions.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said this was to ensure that the practice of money politics was curbed in the party.

Opening the Kubang Pasu Umno division's delegates' meeting here, Dr Mahathir said he was concerned that they would also use their positions to further enrich themselves.

"They think that if they secure positions, they will also obtain facilitation from the government," he said.

He felt that the move by some to contest for the posts of division and branch heads, among others, was to secure contracts for the implementation of government projects.

"We will make sure in the Supreme Council that division heads are not to be awarded any contracts," he said.

He said that division heads who still secure contracts after this and use their riches for personal interest would be blacklisted.

Dr Mahathir said that their activities would be monitored and it would also be ensured that they do not have a chance to secure government contracts.

This, he said, was not to make Umno a party of destitutes but more importantly to ensure that Umno was a clean party.

The prime minister said that the move was not an obstruction for the Malays to acquire wealth but they could do so even though they were not Umno leaders.

He said that the government was striving to produce many more wealthy Malays in the country.

"They (the Malays) will still be able to enjoy wealth even though they are not leaders," he said.

Dr Mahathir also expressed regret over the action of some party leaders who even resorted to roping in opposition members to ensure victory in divisional elections.

He said that he had been told of such tactics which had been adopted in several divisions.

He believed this could have happened because the opposition members involved were still listed as Umno members.

The prime minister said he was also prepared to step down when the time comes.

Even when no longer holding any posts, he said, he would still give his support to Umno, the party he loves.

"I will have to give my support to those who have earlier given me their support," he said.

Dr Mahathir issued a reminder that the political power of the Malays without economic strength would still not guarantee their security.

As such, he said, the Malays must embrace and uphold the values and culture of the race.

Such values and culture in Umno had eroded gradually while corrupt practices were slowly taking root, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in contacts with various levels of society including academics, it was found that they have negative views of Umno.

He said that if this negative culture was allowed to be ingrained in

Umno, then the future of the Malays would be difficult.

"We cannot possibly win the elections merely on the support of Umno members," he said.

The prime minister said that Umno needs the support of not only the party members to ensure continuous victory but also of those outside who were sympathetic.

He said that Umno would remain as a strong party and continue to draw interest if its leaders and members were to uphold noble values and culture.

The people, he said, do not want the country to be led by those who secure positions through their wealth.

"The party will be destroyed if there are problematic leaders and those resorting to corruption," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that justice also would not prevail in the country if corruption was rampant.

Dr Mahathir won the post of division head unopposed.

-- BERNAMA

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