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Mahathir-Love

UMNO MEMBERS SHOULD REMAIN LOYAL TO PRESIDENT

KUALA LUMPUR, June 23 (Bernama) -- Umno's defeat to PAS in the last general election and in the by-election in Lunas was due to the fact that members were only fond of the party president but were not loyal to him, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Umno President also said delegates always referred to him as "our beloved President" when they addressed him at annual Umno General Assemblies but they were not loyal to him.

Dr Mahathir said if only they were loyal, there would not be candidates selected by him, to represent the party in an election, who end up being termed as "not a right candidate" by those who were not chosen.

"Those who say this and complain to me will may sure the candidate chosen will be defeated just to prove that they were right. This is our party's problem," he said in his winding up speech at the end of the 55th Umno General Assembly which ended here today.

Dr Mahathir said he did not believe PAS won because it was an Islamic party and strong nor did Umno lose because it was weak and unIslamic.

He said on the same premise, even if PAS fielded deadwoods and those who were dump and not religious, the candidate would still win.

Dr Mahathir stressed that as President of the party he had no other interest but to ensure that the Umno candidate selected by him won the general election.

He also asked the delegates if they had abided by the President's decision and they replied loudly that they remained loyal.

"Is this really true?" Dr Mahathir asked the delegates and they once again echoed their loyalty.

Dr Mahathir then asked them to rise and make a pledge not to dispute his choice of candidate in future. The audience stood up and showed their support by clapping their hands.

He also pointed out that Umno members should be serious from now on in facing the next general election.

"In Malaysia, the general election never stops. Once the election is over, campaigning for the next will begin. In other democratic countries, once the election is over, they will go home and retire to bed.

"Here, PAS does not seize to visit villages to accuse people, make up slanderous remarks and misuse the mosque. PAS never let's us rest," he added.

However, Dr Mahathir said there seemed to be more concerted support for the party now after the three-day Umno meeting.

"There has been extraordinary reaction. They seem to support us. I believe the support is genuine," he added.

-- BERNAMA

JM ZS LAT DVS