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Umno-Reaction (Abdullah)

DR MAHATHIR'S SPEECH BORN OF OBSERVATION- ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's frank and passionate speech criticising the Malays is born of his wide experience and view of the Malay attitude, deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He had experienced and seen for himself the attitude of the Malays living in kampungs and towns, Abdullah told the media after listening to Dr Mahathir's policy address when opening the Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

After seeing for himself and going through this experience, the Prime Minister had concluded that Malays should change their attitude if they aspired to become a competitive race, he said.

"Dr Mahathir has seen the problem and weaknesses of the Malays from a wider perspective and he himself has the experience of observing their attitude, their ever secure feeling and complacency," Abdullah said.

It was an even greater speech this time around because Dr Mahathir used verses from the Holy Quran to drive home his points and to call for a change in attitude towards one of progress from the Islamic perspective.

On the criticism of the Malays, Abdullah said this had all along been the history of Umno -- criticising them so that they would achieve progress.

"If we want to seek popularity we can....just leave the Malays to themselves and let them do what they like and they will never change," he said.

He said the open criticism of the Malays by Dr Mahathir took into account the intense challenge they were facing in the present era of globalisation and would be left behind if they did not change their complacent attitude.

He said Dr Mahathir had seen the attitude of the Malays who even when given help did not make use of the opportunity on the assumption that they need not have to compete with other races.

Abdullah said Umno and the government had indeed brought about many changes in the lifestyle of the Malays but their attitude had not changed to the extent of even not being grateful, as urged by certain groups, for what the government had done for them.

He said Dr Mahathir also stressed on the wellbeing of the family with a view to bringing about a change in attitude even when they are just children.

-- BERNAMA

AZE AZZ AAM