

27/08/2002

Reject negative values, Puteri Umno told

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Puteri Umno to reject negative values and culture in politics which can ruin the party and country.

He cited money politics as an example of negative culture and said that when money politics begins to dictate the direction of the party, Umno would lose its image and credibility over time.

"I believe being new, Puteri Umno is clean. It will neither be easily influenced by such practices nor will it look for other people's weaknesses and malign them. All this will split the party and lead to its downfall.

"Remember, if you sell your votes to the person who gives you a kickback, you will have leaders without integrity. Such people are even prepared to sell the country if they get position," the Prime Minister said when addressing more than 200 Puteri Umno members at the movement's special meeting at the party headquarters.

Also present were vice-presidents Datuk Seri Mohamed Najib Abdul Razak and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, Umno information chief Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, religious advisor to the Prime Minister Tan Sri Hamid Othman and Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Puteri Umno members to choose only capable leaders.

"When choosing the leaders, we have to evaluate their abilities. Even leaders are human. Who among us mere mortals are not handicapped? We are all handicapped, not physically, but in one way or another."

Citing an example, he said, Umno founder Datuk Onn Jaafar was not perfect when he became the leader.

"He had his weaknesses but at that point of time, we only looked at his ability to lead. Those days, it was not easy to find a good orator. Everyone was impressed by skills."

Dr Mahathir said when Umno was established, the unity among the Malays was so strong that the British had to listen to their wishes.

"But as the Malay race is weak, we cannot let our emotions and feeling of jealousy influence us. Everyone must remember and always bear in mind that the party's struggles are much more important than one's personal glory. As Umno members, we must love the party more than ourselves."

Dr Mahathir said all must be united and focused in uplifting the race and avoid trivial issues which would hinder the progress of the Malays.

He said for instance, there were Umno members when they were not elected or lost in the party's contest who would look for the weaknesses of their enemies and expose them.

"In many instances, we have seen a number of our candidates lose in the elections not because the other parties are better but because those who were not picked to stand as candidates had worked hard to run him down."

Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno must know and embrace the party's struggles. He also hit out at those who join Umno for personal gain.

"There are Umno members who question what they stand to gain by joining the party. Umno has never promised its members position or wealth."

Later, at a Press conference, Dr Mahathir said he had not received any complaints related to money politics during the on-going Puteri Umno branch meetings.

