

22/07/2002

Merit, quality to be criteria for recruiting party members

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Umno leaders insisted that merit and quality should be the criteria for recruiting members and grooming leaders to curb the attitude of self-interest among the party's ranks.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said today that Umno must stress quality when it came to members, instead of focusing on quantity.

"We have to reinforce the importance of duty, loyalty and service so that members can uphold Umno's struggles. We can do this through our ceramah and leadership camps."

Puteri Umno pro-tem chief Azalina Othman Said said Umno leaders had to make a conscious effort to deal with the problem of self-serving members.

"Unless it is something like a basic necessity, leaders should not entertain their members' appeals just to get support."

They were responding to a statement by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday that the party's fighting spirit had weakened as members were more interested in self-promotion than struggling for the party's cause.

Dr Mahathir said that commitment and support were missing as evident in the slim majority the Umno candidate obtained in the recent Pendang by-election.

On Thursday, Umno's Datuk Othman Abdul polled 22,825 votes to wrest the seat from Pas candidate Dr Mohd Hayati Othman, who obtained 22,542 votes.

Muhammad said the source of this problem was members who entered the party to promote their self-interests.

He said this selfishness would endanger the party and jeopardise its chances in elections.

"When the party makes a decision everyone should put aside their personal feelings and abide by it."