

26 AUG 2002

Mahathir-Puteri

DON'T RUN DOWN ONE ANOTHER, MAHATHIR TELLS PUTERI UMNO MEMBERS

KUALA LUMPUR, 26 Ogos (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Puteri Umno members not to bad-mouth fellow members when the movement holds its divisional and national elections soon.

Such behaviour would not only weaken the party but could also destroy it, said the prime minister and Umno president.

"In the contest, the candidates will look for other people's weaknesses by exposing private matters and so forth. This will not only kill the candidate but also the party because it means the party does not have a good leader," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this during a briefing at an explanation session on Puteri Umno's meeting and election rules and Umno's code of ethics.

At the function, the prime minister also launched the movement's anti-money politics campaign in conjunction with its divisional elections from Sept 16 to Oct 15 and national elections on Nov 2.

Present were Umno vice-presidents Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and information chief Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob.

Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno members must not get involved in corrupt practices and money politics as the immediate gain they got would ruin them in future.

"What's important is that (the members) must choose leaders capable of bringing progress to Umno" and not question the movement's weaknesses and raise trivial issues, he said.

The members must ensure unity within Umno and put party interest above self interest, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that it was the effects of bad practices during party elections that led to Umno losing many seats in the last general election.

"(Umno lost seats) not because the rival parties are stronger and better, but because of disputes within Umno," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno members must remember that everyone has his or her weakness, and should thereafter assess candidates based only on her leadership capabilities and ability to bring progress to the race.

"We must remember that we are a weak race and should not allow our feelings to influence us too much...especially the attitude of disagreeing with this person and that person," he said.

At a news conference later, Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno's branch elections that started on Aug 1 and ends on Sept 15 was progressing smoothly.

The Umno president denied that the Umno Supreme Council discouraged contest for the top posts in Puteri Umno.

Khalil, who was present at the news conference, said Umno did not impose any restriction on Puteri Umno members vying for posts at all levels of the movement.

He said Umno headquarters only advised candidates not to be extreme or indulge in money politics when campaigning.

-- BERNAMA

HK ZS SK