

23 JUN 2002

Umno-Support

UMNO YOUTH PLEDGES SOLID SUPPORT FOR DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, June 23 (Bernama) -- The Umno Youth today pledged solid support and loyalty to Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Its vice-head Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir said the movement wants Dr Mahathir to continue to be at the helm to preserve stability in Umno and the country.

Speaking at a press conference after chairing the movement's meeting, here, he said Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammudin Tun Hussein was trying to arrange for a meeting with Dr Mahathir to convey the youth wing's solid support for his leadership.

Dr Mahathir shocked the nation yesterday when he suddenly announced his resignation as Umno president and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman as well as from all other party posts.

He later withdrew the decision when persuaded to by Umno supreme council members.

He made the surprise announcement at the end of his winding-up address on the final day of the three-day 56th Umno General Assembl at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

Dr Mahathir left for a week-long vacation to Europe this morning.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister and State Umno liaison head Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam expressed the State Umno's undivided support to Dr Mahathir's leadership.

He said BN component parties in Melaka also pledged their full support for Dr Mahathir.

"Melaka Umno held its emergency meeting at 3am today. All divisions stated their undivided support and loyalty to Dr Mahathir's leadership," he told reporters.

He said State Umno leaders would explain the matter to party members at the grassroots.

He urged the people to remain calm and be patient and work hard to give the confidence to Dr Mahathir to continue leading the party and country.

"A thanksgiving function will be held at my official residence "Seri Bendahara" on Tuesday night. All Umno members will gather to express their gratitude to Dr Mahathir for agreeing to retract his decision," he said.

Mohd Ali said the State BN would meet this evening to discuss the matter.

On claims by Pas and foreign media that Dr Mahathir's abrupt announcement was yet another drama, he said: "If we listen to the opposition and the foreign media, whatever is done by Umno and the government is said to be a drama.

"What's important is that the people should not be carried away by such claims but instead ensure Dr Mahathir continue to lead the country which needs his leadership.

"Dr Mahathir is a respected leader both locally and internationally, including from world super powers," he said.

Mohd Ali, who is also 4B Youth President, said the movement prayed that Dr Mahathir would return to serve the party and country.

The Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) today called on civil servants to give total support to Dr Mahathir's leadership.

Its President Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam appealed to Dr Mahathir to

consider the people's feelings.

The people had in unison urged Dr Mahathir to lead the country, he told reporters after opening the Melaka branch of the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) triennial conference in Melaka.

He said Cuepacs would send a delegation to persuade Dr Mahathir to continue as Prime Minister on his return from vacation.

Siva Subramaniam said Cuepacs would pass a motion supporting the measures taken by Dr Mahathir to further stimulate the country's economy and improve the socio-economic status of Bumiputeras.

The Melaka Cuepacs today passed an emergency motion supporting Dr Mahathir to continue as Prime Minister.

Its Secretary Harry Tan Hock Huat said the motion received the unanimous support of the 120 delegates attending the meeting.

He said the motion would be tabled at the NUTP national delegates conference to be held in Terengganu in September.

In KOTA KINABALU, political leaders in Sabah expressed relief over Dr Mahathir's decision to retract his decision.

United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) President Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, who was shocked by Dr Mahathir's announcement, thanked the Prime Minister for having reconsidered his decision to quit from all party posts.

"When Umno leaders persuaded him to reconsider, I think the responsibility to the country prompted him to withdraw his decision," he told reporters after opening the party's Gaya division meeting.

Dompok, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said the country still needed Dr Mahathir's stewardship not only for development but he had also brought glory to Malaysia at the international arena.

He said it was inappropriate for Dr Mahathir to resign now but when the time comes, he should definitely prepare the country for it.

The Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) expressed support for Dr Mahathir to continue to lead the country.

Expressing extreme shock and distress at the announcement, SAPP said the party strongly believed that only the fair leadership, wisdom and strength of Dr Mahathir could steer the country in overcoming all challenges, both internally and externally, being faced by the country.

"SAPP sincerely and unreservedly call on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to continue to lead our people, the country and Barisan Nasional," it said in a statement.

In KUCHING, the Sarawak BN component parties want Dr Mahathir to remain as head of government.

Chief Minister and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said Dr Mahathir's decision to withdraw his decision.

"Alhamdulillah (All praise to God), Dr Mahathir can be convinced to stay on and continue to lead us in the BN and render his services to the nation," he said when commenting on the prime minister's shocking announcement.

He said he was surprised to hear his announcement to quit but everything was fine now.

Taib noted Dr Mahathir's leadership had propelled the country to a high level of development.

Sarawak National Party (SNAP) senior vice-president Datuk William Mawan described Dr Mahathir as a visionary and an exemplary leader.

"Dr Mahathir is a dynamic leader whom we cannot allow him to go just like that. His deep personal commitment which was extraordinary has seen the country to what it is today," he said.

SNAP would pray for his good health and continue to guide the nation at this crucial moment, said Mawan, who is also State Minister for Public

Health and Environment.

He said it was Dr Mahathir's exceptional leadership qualities that had helped the country pull through the economic crisis and the nation enjoying greater socio-economic development.

In PENANG, the State Gerakan delegates conference passed an emergency motion today, urging Dr Mahathir to continue serving the country to tackle various challenges faced by the nation, both internally and externally.

The motion was tabled by Penang Gerakan chairman and Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and was supported unanimously by 275 delegates attending the meeting.

He said the party wished to express its high appreciation to the immense contributions by Dr Mahathir in nation-building efforts.

In MUAR, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir urged the people not to make speculations over Dr Mahathir's announcement.

He said they should instead feel relief and thankful that Dr Mahathir had agreed to continue to head Umno, the backbone of Barisan Nasional (BN).

"We're relieved now. No need to make any speculations," he told reporters after opening the Nasuha Herbs and Spices Museum, the largest herbs museum in Asia, and possibly in the world.

The museum, on a seven-hectare site, is located at the Muar-Pagoh road, near here.

Kadir said the people should be grateful as it would be difficult to imagine a "vacuum" if Dr Mahathir quit the post.

He said there was no reason for him to quit from party posts as he received 100 per cent support from Umno and BN component parties.

-- BERNAMA

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