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Mahathir-Tears

DR MAHATHIR NEAR TO TEARS WHEN OPENING UMNO ASSEMBLY FOR LAST TIME

By: Zulkefli Salleh

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad opening the Umno General Assembly as party president for the last time was close to tears when nearing the end of his policy speech. He retires in October.

The Prime Minister struggled to hold back his tears when he told the assembled delegates that it was the last time he was opening the Umno General Assembly.

Asking for forgiveness from the delegates for any mistake or offences in the course of serving the party, Dr Mahathir choked in emotion and took several gulps of water.

As he raised his eyes in prayer to Allah for the Malay people of this country, the tears welled up in his eyes.

Despite the feeling of sadness, Dr Mahathir was able to end his prayer in a clear and strong voice.

Dr Mahathir who has been Umno President for more than two decades and had led Umno and the Barisan Nasional in five general elections received a standing ovation from the more than 2,000 delegates. Many of the delegates were also moved to tears upon realising that their beloved leader was retiring.

There were also tears among the thousands of Umno members who were following the speech on closed circuit TV outside the hall.

"I apologise for taking such a long time to deliver my speech. I only want to contribute to the party which has given me many opportunities to realise all my ideas... to raise the dignity of my race, to bring some progress to my race and my country," he said.

"Whether I have been successful or otherwise it is not for me to judge. History and the people will judge me on the service I have rendered," said Dr Mahathir who has been Umno President and Prime Minister for 22 years.

Dr Mahathir expressed his thanks to Malays and Bumiputeras and other citizens of this country for their support for him.

-- BERNAMA

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