

21 JUN 2003

Mahathir-Winding-up (Relieved)

DR MAHATHIR RELIEVED THERE IS NO CONTEST FOR UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENCY

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Expressing relief that there will be no contest for the Umno deputy president's post, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that if the spirit of consensus prevails, it will ensure a clean sweep for the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election.

He said he was pleased that all the three vice-presidents had pledged to accept whichever candidate chosen by his successor, Datuk Seri Dr Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, to be the deputy prime minister.

They had also agreed to follow the party tradition what the one appointed deputy prime minister should become the Umno deputy president.

"I'm thankful. From the speeches of the vice-presidents, it appears that there will not be any tussle in the party," he said in his winding-up speech at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The prime minister said he was worried that if there was a tussle for the post, the defeated candidate would be disappointed and would take action that could split the party.

Dr Mahathir said he was worried because some members did not understand the ethics of democracy and were unable to accept the defeat of their candidate.

He said the party would be safe if there was no contest and all members abided by the decision to be made by Abdullah when he takes over as Umno president.

"If this spirit prevails, I'm confident that we will make a clean sweep in the next general election," he said.

He said that only one name should be submitted for each constituency and the practice of sending delegations and making phone calls or appeals should stop.

If more than one name was submitted, those not chosen must state that they accepted the leaders' decision, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that all party members must work hard to ensure the victory of the chosen candidates because their success meant the party's victory for the race, religion and country.

He also reiterated his advice to the Malays not to take the easy way out to get the comforts of life because it would put the country in jeopardy.

He cited the history of the Malay rulers who handed the administrative powers of their states to the British when offered political pension, Rolls Royce cars and yellow umbrellas.

"Don't look for the easy way, find the best way to obtain comfort. Take the easy way and the country will be in jeopardy, history has shown this," he said.

He said that wealth and comfort are obtained slowly through patience because Islam taught its followers to be patient.

"In this age too there are people who look for the easy way. When they get an opportunity, they sell that opportunity," he said.

He said that there were Malay entrepreneurs in the country who achieved success through patience without have to find a short cut and cited as examples Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal and Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary who he said were listed as being among the most wealthy people in the world.

-- BERNAMA

MAN ZS RON JK