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Umno-Reaction (Round-up)

A TOUCHING GESTURE BY DR MAHATHIR, SAYS NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Umno Vice-President Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has described Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's winding up speech, his last as Umno President before stepping down in October, as very touching especially his willingness to continue to serve the party.

"It is very touching indeed to Umno members where at the end of the speech the President expressed his intention to continue to help the party in whatever ways possible," he told reporters after the party ended its 54th general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here today.

Najib said it was a clear reflection of Dr Mahathir's unwavering loyalty and love for Umno whether he was in power or not.

"I view this as a fine example and if every Umno member was as strongly committed and as loyal as the President, the party will continue to remain as the dominant party in the government," he said.

On Dr Mahathir's confidence that there would be no power struggle for the number two post, Najib said several party traditions in this respect should be observed.

For example, he said a person who was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister would normally be entrusted with the task of carrying the duties as Umno Deputy President.

"This we must retain because if we continue to fight among ourselves (for the number two post) and we do not follow the tradition, there will be nothing for the Umno members to hold on and Umno possibly will be overwhelmed by the disease," he said.

Najib hoped Umno members would heed Dr Mahathir's parting advice.

Another Umno vice-president, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Dr Mahathir looked happy because he knew he would leave behind a strong party.

"I think he was all fired up as he gave his parting advice," he said.

He said the assurance to strengthen party unity by the delegates must have surely made Dr Mahathir happy.

Among others, he said the delegates assured Dr Mahathir that they would protect the party and pledged support to his successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when he stepped down as Prime Minister and Umno President.

"I think the Prime Minister can see that we are really sincere in wanting to be united," he said.

Muhyiddin said unity in Umno would be the members' contribution to Dr Mahathir.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said he would return to Johor with the satisfaction knowing that Dr Mahathir had confidence in Johor Umno to make a clean sweep in the next general election.

"If the mood at the general assembly could be used as indicator, we would go to the polls in full confidence," he said.

He said Johor had mobilised its election machinery in preparation for the general election.

Umno Youth Chief Datuk Hishamuddin Hussein reminded the members and the younger generation of the unfinished task to bring greater progress to the race and country.

He said he had pledged to Dr Mahathir to do his best to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to him.

"Dr Mahathir had said the younger generation should continue the struggle started by those before them since independence," he said.

Kelantan Umno Chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed was confident that party

members would keep their promises to look after the party.

He said Dr Mahathir had succeeded in rejuvenating the party since the 1999 general election which saw the Barisan Nasional (BN) losing many seats to the opposition.

"So it provides encouragement to us in Kelantan. Insyaallah, if we follow Dr Mahathir's advice, we will win all seats in Malaysia," he said.

He described Dr Mahathir as an incredible leader.

He said Umno members should be grateful because of the smooth transition of power from Dr Mahathir to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

-- BERNAMA

MUN LES ZS MOZ ABG