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Mahathir-Umno

UMNO WILL BE RUINED IF MEMBERS ARE SELFISH, SAYS DR M

JITRA, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- Umno will be ruined just like parties that struggled for independence in other countries were rejected by the people later if its leaders and members gave more importance to individual interests than of the party's future, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said what was important was the party and not individuals because the people would support the party that could ensure their well-being.

"We must really love Umno, not because we have a position in Umno, but because Umno is the tool that can bring prosperity to us," he said when launching Puteri Umno's Special Election Unit, here.

He said not many parties in the world that fought for independence remained in power after that because the parties changed their priorities from giving importance to enhance unity, they split due to internal power struggles after attaining independence.

"They jostle for positions to fill up their own pockets, resulting in a split in the party, and as a result the party becomes weak and loses the people's support," he said.

Dr Mahathir said individuals as leaders cannot bring success to religion, race and country without solid support from party members.

He was grateful that Umno, which had struggled for more than 50 years, was still popular among the people and had won elections to form the government.

"I'm grateful that despite the jostling for posts, the party is not weak, but to a certain extent it has caused a split like what happened in 1987.

"But many returned to Umno after realising that what was popular was Umno and not individuals," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno had changed the fate of the Malays from a poor and humiliated race in their own country to the prosperity they are enjoying now.

"Nobody can say they did not get anything from the struggles of Umno.

"They are enjoying various facilities, including electricity supply, water, road and education," he said.

"If we ask what we get from Umno for ourselves, we'll be disappointed and will cry forever," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia and its leaders are known and looked up upon in the world.

"Before, has the president of the United States ever wrote in to a Malay leader stating the reasons to attack a country? Now, we can say we disagree.

"If before, we "terkepon-kepon" (scared and quiet, cannot do anything in Kedah dialect).

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysia's first Prime Minister the late Tunku Abdul Rahman had made great contributions to the country as Umno president.

"I don't deny the contributions of Tunku, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn but they alone cannot make any contribution. What's important is Umno, what brings success is Umno," he said.

Dr Mahathir urged Puteri Umno members not to emulate the culture practised by more senior members of the party who bickered among themselves for party positions.

He expressed sadness over the scramble for the top post in Puteri Umno during the movement's election last year.

"We should not use the weakness and the bad side of a person, rightly or wrongly, to gain positions. Dirty tactics must be avoided but instead show your ability," he said.

Urging Puteri Umno leaders and members to maintain their noble values, Dr Mahathir said he was confident that the movement would create a new culture in Umno.

He said Puteri and Umno Youth would remain in Umno to inherit the leadership from the older generation and to pursue Umno's struggles.

On the general election, Dr Mahathir said Puteri Umno must learn the techniques of campaigning and support anyone picked as candidate.

"Puteri must understand politics and democracy. If not selected as a candidate, they must support the selected person because only this way Umno can win," he said.

He advised Puteri to perform their duties and responsibilities without feeling frustrated as they could still struggle for the race although not chosen as a candidate.

Dr Mahathir also asked Umno leaders not to ignore government officers because they contributed to the party's victory in the election.

"Umno leaders must be humble, not arrogant and proud although they are from the government and not ask government officers to be transferred for petty reasons," he said.

He said they must maintain good relations with government officers because they were also voters who numbered nearly one million.

"We do not want to lose one million votes from government officers. This does not include their wives and at least, on the average, one of their children, who will make up to three million," he added.

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