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Umno-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR SENDS LETTER STATING HE CAN'T ATTEND ASSEMBLY

KUALA LUMPUR, July 21 (Bernama) -- Former Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is absent from the Umno general assembly for the first time in 30 years, has written a letter to party secretary-general Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad stating that he could not attend the assembly this time around.

The contents of Dr Mahathir's letter was read by Radzi when he tabled the secretary's report at the 56th general assembly which started today at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

"Yang Berhormat Datuk Seri, as my wife and I are abroad during the general assembly, I am extremely sad that I can't attend any of the functions to which I have been invited. I wish everyone a happy assembly and extend my regards," the former prime minister said in the letter.

Dr Mahathir, who led Umno for 22 years before stepping down in 2003, is on holiday in Argentina and will visit Colombia on Friday at the invitation of that country.

He is expected to return home on Sunday morning.

Meanwhile, Radzi welcomed the presence of 93 delegates from abroad representing 28 political parties from 26 countries.

"This represents the biggest number of foreign delegates in the history of the general assembly," he said.

Among the foreign political parties which had sent representatives to the assembly were the Party of Democratic Action (Bosnia Herzegovina), Cambodian People's Party (Cambodia), Communist Party of China (China), Cuba Communist Party (Cuba), Egyptian Communist Party (Egypt), Indian National Congress (India) and Partai Demokrat (Indonesia).

Radzi also welcomed the presence of 50 representatives from 53 Umno clubs overseas including from the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Australia, Egypt and the United States.

He said Umno now had 3,301,415 members in 19,680 registered branches.

A total of 2,531 members are attending the current general assembly.

-- BERNAMA

NBB MKO LAT AO