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Abide by party's decision on choice of candidates for polls, says Dr M

ALOR STAR, Thurs. - Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged all Barisan Nasional component party members to abide by the coalition's decision on candidates, place the party's interests above theirs, and not resort to sabotage out of frustration.

The former Prime Minister said: "I myself accept whatever decisions made (by the Government).

"I agree and support all measures (of the Government), because I want the BN to win.

"If we do not win, then the next time it will be difficult for us to win again."

He was speaking to an audience of BN candidates, State leaders and BN component party workers who had gathered at the Kedah Menteri Besar's official residence here.

The gathering was to announce the list of Kedah BN election candidates. Dr Mahathir is Kedah BN adviser.

On aspirants who did not make it, Dr Mahathir stressed that they must support the selected candidates because "no one knows, maybe it is their turn to be candidates this time around, but in future you might be selected".

Dr Mahathir drove home the point about the importance of putting party interests above individual ones, saying that Malaysia was widely respected globally because it had a capable party in Government.

"We never look at the person, it is the party that is of utmost importance," said Dr Mahathir.

He added even the brightest and capable individual could not do much if he had no party to support him as leader of a Government.

"We therefore want a strong Government, not a weak one like in some other countries, which topples even at the slightest push," he said, describing weak Governments as those with very slim majorities in Parliament."

Dr Mahathir reminded party workers to strive hard and said there should not be a situation where party workers shut down their operation centres out of frustration (merajuk).

On his advice to the State BN machinery and candidates, Dr Mahathir said nothing comes easily. "Nothing comes just like that. There is no victory if we sit at home and do not go out to vote or campaign for our candidates.

"The party and Government comes above all else," he said adding that a journalist asked him yesterday whether he agreed with the Government's approaches and policies to which he replied: "I agree and support 100 per cent, (the measures) such as the fight against corruption and other matters".

On Pas, he said the opposition party had no issue apart from maligning Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Dr Mahathir also hit out at Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang for accusing Abdullah of playing to the gallery when leading prayers.

"Hadi himself said he wants to condemn Pak Lah, because when Pak Lah's mother passed away, he did not lead the prayers for the deceased.

"So it has now turned out that Hadi regards the leading of prayers as a method of campaigning for the election".

Conversely, Dr Mahathir said that when Abdullah did lead prayers, Hadi

accused him of doing so as a political gimmick.

"Being an imam is not a political gimmick but a matter of religion, and that is why we ask them (Pas) not to mix religious matters with party politics," he added.