

Dr Mahathir : money politics will ruin Umno in GE
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Andrew Ong

Former Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad forewarned Umno leaders involved with money politics - that they are compromising the party's chances in the next general election.

"Now, the whole country knows that the Umno leaders who would be elected were using money. Come the general election, they will reject them because they are corrupt.

mahathir perdana forum bangsa malaysia 121108 02"Not all (are corrupt) but the majority use money. Everyone knows that. So you can be a leader in Umno but it is impossible that the voters will choose you (at the general election)" he said.

He gave this ominous message at a press conference proceeding his keynote address on Bangsa Malaysia in Putrajaya today. The address was part of a series of talks organised by the Perdana Leadership Foundation.

When probed if the quota system he introduced which was making money politics endemic in the party, Mahathir denied it. He argued that it was instituted to curb corruption, however the octogenarian acknowledged that the measure has failed.

Despite the concession, he dismissed direct elections as a solution. For him, the only solution was to charge those who were involved.

He half-jokingly said that perhaps those buying their way to party posts should be detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

"That's a good way to use ISA. Not to arrest somebody who wrote some nonsense," said Mahathir, a thinly-veiled reference to his one-time ally and popular blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin.

Thumbs up for Muhyiddin

On the first ever three-cornered fight for the Umno deputy presidency, Mahathir quipped that Muhyiddin Yassin was his choice, and took the opportunity to have a dig at Muhammad Muhd Taib.

"I think there is a lot of hanky panky going on. When you know that someone has a bad history is still getting support, I think that bad history has relevance to his support," he said.

Muhyiddin is the favourite, but faces stiff competition from party information chief and supreme council member Muhammad and vice-president Mohd Ali Rustam.

On the Wanita chief position, Mahathir would leave it to the delegates to decide.

"In a way it is good because it is democratic. As long as there is no money involved it is a good idea they should do that," he said.

rafidah aziz It is an open secret that Mahathir and incumbent women's wing chief Rafidah Aziz have fallen apart in recent years. She faces a potential leadership challenge from her long time deputy Sharizat Abdul Jalil.

'Najib can't handle economy'

On the economy, Mahathir said that the world was on the verge of a global recession and he was not confident that the prime minister-in-waiting Najib Abdul Razak was up to the challenge.

"I have no confidence in (incoming US president Barack) Obama, and what about Najib? Because this is too big for Najib. Too big for Obama," he said.

Elaborating, Mahathir said that the global economic crisis requires international action to mend the current global financial systems which was open to abuse.

"Unless we change the system, (abuses) are not going to stop. To change the system we need international cooperation. Not just an edict from Washington," he added.

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