

# MAHATHIR'S LOYALTY QUESTIONED



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PORT DICKSON: Umno members are beginning to question Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's loyalty to the party and Government.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin said Umno members had difficulty coming to terms with the manner in which the former prime minister was attacking Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his policies.

He said they had voiced concern that the former prime minister and Umno president could cause more damage to the present administration should he continue with "roadshows" to voice his grievances.

Muhyiddin said this was his impression after Umno members expressed dismay over the former prime minister's attack on Abdullah and his policies at a dialogue attended by Opposition politicians in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

"These past two days, everywhere I go, many have been asking me the same question: 'Is it true Tun (Dr Mahathir) attended an Opposition gathering?'"

"Clearly, they are disappointed. Our concern is that they (Umno members) are having doubts about his loyalty to the party and the Government he led for 22



years.

Muhyiddin said some may feel Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz went overboard yesterday in launching a blistering attack on Dr Mahathir but "it could be a manifestation of his disappointment with Dr Mahathir's actions".

Muhyiddin said the question asked by members now was whether it was right for Dr Ma-

hathir to attend the dialogue and attack the Government in his capacity as an Umno member and a former party president.

Muhyiddin, who is Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister, said Umno members were taught respect and loyalty to the party leadership by Dr Mahathir.

"These were among many things that Tun had strongly instilled among us," he said after

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...Muhyiddin

presenting, excellent awards to staff of the Veterinary Services Department.

Muhyiddin said Dr Mahathir's actions may have caused some confusion within Umno, although there were no signs of a backlash from Umno and the Barisan National grassroots.

However, he felt that restlessness would increase should the situation persisted.

"Nazri may have felt it. I admit

I am (restless), too. but I am not telling him to leave (the party) as I know (Dr Mahathir) still loves Umno.

"It is not wrong to say there are some ripples around. What we are concerned about is instability within Umno and it casting doubts on Pak Lah's (Abdullah) leadership."

Muhyiddin said that was an ugly scenario.

"I am pleading with Dr Mahathir, if there is any dissatisfaction, talk it over with the leadership."

He said under Dr Mahathir's leadership, Umno members were told to voice their grievances through proper party channels, although it was not a popular move.

"But in principle, we supported the decision.

"We respected Dr Mahathir as the president and now it is Pak Lah's turn. We cannot be having two heads leading the country."

Muhyiddin expressed surprise that accusations were levelled against Abdullah at a time when the economy was strengthening and unity and support for the present administration was rock solid.

"Everyone has; weaknesses, even myself, Pak Lah and Dr Mahathir, but if we are to wash our dirty linen in public, questions will be raised as to whether we are doing things the right way."