

Muhyiddin: I did not betray the party which I founded

PETALING JAYA: Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) must move forward with its struggles without former chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, says Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Dismissing allegations that he betrayed the party, the Prime Minister and Bersatu president said party leaders "come and go".

"But the party's struggles must always be upheld. I did not betray the party which I founded. There is no reason for me to betray the party that I formed," he said in a special address in conjunction with Bersatu's Srikandi, Armada and divisional meetings yesterday.

Muhyiddin expressed appreciation for Dr Mahathir's role and efforts, saying he could not deny the former prime minister's contributions and history with Bersatu.

"I respect him as a former leader of the party. All those who are close to me know that I respect Mahathir.

"I believe not only me, but all of us feel sad that he is no longer with us. It is alright, he

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chose his way. I wish him all the best," said Muhyiddin.

In May, Bersatu removed Dr Mahathir, his son and deputy president Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, Armada chief Syed Saddiq Syed

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Abdul Rahman and supreme council members Dr Maszlee Malik and Amiruddin Hamzah for sitting in the Opposition bench during the Parliament sitting on May 18.

Muhyiddin added that it was a huge responsibility for him to lead the party and the government.

"Experience has taught me that position and power is not permanent. It is not something for you to show off ... it will not be permanently yours," he said.

He urged party members at all levels to carry out their responsibilities well and advised those who did not win in the party election to continue with the party's struggles.

"We must move on and not look back. We must move forward to face everything that is in front of us with perseverance.

"In September, our party will celebrate its fourth anniversary. Although a new party, it is prominent and is the backbone of the government at the federal and state levels. This is something we should be proud of," he added.

Muhyiddin said within that period, Bersatu

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had expanded and had some 420,000 members nationwide, with 197 divisions and 2,950 branches.

"This is a big achievement within a short time," he pointed out.

He said in the early days of the party's formation, the grassroots played a key role.

"When we just formed the party, many came to meet me in Kuala Lumpur. We discussed in small groups and moved the party with limited resources.

"All of you organised programmes with your own money, there were no big tents or big jamuan (banquets). But thousands attended them and the response was extraordinary," he added.

Paying tribute to the grassroots leaders, Muhyiddin said he still remembered their faces.

"Most were not division chiefs or those with money. They were small men with brave hearts. These are the ones who fought to form divisions and contributed to the party's success in the last general election," he added.