

'Dr M's views reflect love for party'
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KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin welcomed former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism of Umno's shortcomings, describing it as his personal assessment of the party.

Muhyiddin said it was obvious that Dr Mahathir was speaking out of his love for Umno and his desire to see that the party was strong and able to defend its position in the government.

Speaking to reporters after handing out the national-level Anugerah Ilham Desa awards at Bandar Seri Putra in Kajang yesterday, Muhyiddin said: "I believe that is why Dr Mahathir had voiced his views, which although sincere, can be bitter."

He said the views expressed by Dr Mahathir in an interview with Mingguan Malaysia on Sunday were constructive and "I do not think that he has any bad intentions as he loves Umno".

Muhyiddin said although Dr Mahathir's views should be taken seriously, he did not agree with the statement that Umno leaders had not taken appropriate measures to strengthen the party and the government since the 2008 election.

"Umno president and prime minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, has taken giant steps in moving the country ahead with his transformation plan, which has begun to show the intended results."

"Najib understands what the people want and we are now putting in the appropriate measures which I believe has helped us to regain the support of the Malays, Chinese and Indians."

Muhyiddin said he, however, agreed with Dr Mahathir that more needed to be done, especially in overcoming internal matters in Umno, including grooming second generation leaders at all levels, to continue the party's struggle.

He said: "That is why Najib, myself and Umno vice presidents are regularly meeting and visiting the various divisions, not only to meet Umno leaders and members but also those of other Barisan Nasional component parties.

"I personally go down (to the divisions) three or four times a week to engage with the people."

Muhyiddin said he agreed with Dr Mahathir that the biggest challenge was to improve the public perception about Umno and BN, which was tougher now compared with his time and before that.

"The present generation of leaders and society do not carry any baggage of the past, including the experience of the country's pre-Merdeka struggles, and have a totally different mindset.

"They just see the new situation and future, and in doing anything, we need to take into consideration the issues of knowledge, transparency, human rights, etc."

Muhyiddin said Umno leaders were trying their best to manage the situation.

Asked to comment on the tabling of the Peaceful Assembly Bill on Thursday, Muhyiddin said: "Actually, this is one of the manifestations of the BN leaders' sincerity to forge a holistic political transformation for the country.

"This law will provide the avenue and opportunity for Malaysians to hold peaceful gatherings to voice their views."

Putrajaya, Muhyiddin said the current education policies were an improved version of those in the past.

He said he was aware of the public's perception that every time a minister was appointed to the portfolio, they would introduce different policies.

"That is not the case as there is some form of continuity," Muhyiddin, said in an interview when he launched a book entitled Perspectives: Muhyiddin Yassin.

"The policies are not exactly new as it is connected to past policies."

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said changes were necessary in education as it was constantly evolving and the ministry was reviewing policies from time to time.

"We need to ask ourselves if the policies are good enough or whether improvements need to be made."

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