

Comprehensive speech by Abdullah, says Dr Mahathir

NST-24/9/2004: 3 Perdana

FORMER Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his successor's speech was very comprehensive, with due focus given to addressing the challenges facing Malays.

He said it was important for Malays to be more competitive in the globalised world.

It was high time Malays expected less from the Government and started competing on their own steam.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the stand taken by Umno Youth and Wanita Umno that traitors not be allowed back into the party.

He welcomed their position.

"The pledges made to keep out those who have stabbed Umno in the back is not a decision I made.

"It was made unanimously by Umno and it is the party's right to do so, not mine."

Dr Mahathir, who was Prime Minister for 22 years until he retired last October, said he sacked Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was then his deputy, on grounds of his "immoral character" and not the convictions.

"I am sure Pak Lah would do the same," Dr Mahathir said in reference to other ministers who may be found to have immoral characteristics.

Dr Mahathir urged Umno members to place great importance in loyalty and never think of betraying the party. "I myself was thrown out from the party, but I came back later. When I was out, I never betrayed Umno."

He said it was the right of all wings in Umno not to accept Anwar back into the party.

"It is Umno's decision. It is the right of Umno to make the decision. It is not my right," he said.

Dr Mahathir added this year's assembly to him was a relaxing one as he did not have to prepare for the meeting. "I came here to listen to speeches and to makan."



AMUSED: Dr Mahathir seems amused by some remarks during the assembly yesterday.