

DR M: LOSER WILL STAY ON

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Musa Hitam will continue to serve Umno and the Government, whoever wins the party deputy presidency on Friday, says Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Neither of them will leave the party or the Government," he said in an interview with "Suara Merdeka," the official organ of Umno.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who had been elected unopposed an Umno president and will take over as Prime Minister when Datuk Hussein Onn steps down, said he believed the contest for the deputy presidency would not adversely affect the party or government administrative machinery.

Tengku Razaleigh, the Finance Minister, and Datuk Musa, the Education Minister, are involved in a door-die contest for tin; Umno deputy presidency.

The election will be held on Friday, the first day of the three-day Umno general assembly.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir stressed that contests for high positions in the party were not new, and pointed out that Tun Dr Ismail once challenged Tun Razak for the deputy presidency.

"Tun Dr Ismail lost, but continued to serve the party. And when Tun Razak became party president, Tun Ismail accepted the post of deputy president willingly," he said.

"This is the example we must show now."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the contest for the deputy presidency appeared to have many implications, and as it was also very heated, things had been done which should not have been done.

"Sometimes, it appears as though we are fighting with a candidate from a different party," he said.

He hoped that when the contest was over, party members would close ranks and put Umno interests and unity above everything else.

"The loser must accept the leader who is chosen and accept the majority decision," he said.

"If we do not uphold this principle, we do not have the right to adopt the principle of democracy."

He was confident that the feeling of rivalry now present would subside, and subside more quickly if Umno leaders were united.

"I hope Umno members will not allow themselves to be overcome with emotion, like jumping for joy when their candidate wins or becoming grief stricken when their candidate loses," he said

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DATUK HUSSEIN. . . last Supreme DR MAHATHIR. . . 'I'll accept whoever is elected'

Dr M to accept the decision of delegates

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"I hope there will be no untoward incidents such as jeering or booing. Whoever wins, it will be a victory for Umno and not a personal victory."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that personally, he would accept whoever was chosen by the delegates to be deputy president.

"As someone who upholds the principles of democracy, I will accept the delegates' decision," he said.

Asked why he did not pick his own deputy president, he said: "The appointment of the Deputy Prime Minister is the democratic right of the Prime Minister,

"But if the Prime Minister can also decide who should be the party's deputy president, then the concept of the party controlling the Government will not have any meaning."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said there had been suggestions that there could be two deputies as both candidates were equally qualified and popular.

"My answer is that if we are to have two deputies just because there are two people who are qualified, then we will be forced to have three deputies if at some time in the future, there are three people equally qualified," he said.

"For me, this is not the solving of a problem. It is only postponing the solution. By doing this, we would only be transferring the problem from one level to a higher level.

"If we avoid a contest at the deputy level, we will

only face a contest for the highest post (president) when there is a vacancy.

"We must work to avoid a contest at the highest level because if there is one, an unhealthy situation will arise.

"If there is a contest at the deputy level, a split can be avoided because the party leader is in place and he would be the uniting factor.

"But if there is a contest at the highest level, the party will be split into two and this must be avoided."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said that in the selection of the deputy president, Umno members must go by party tradition.

"When a person wins the post, there should be no one who should challenge him, except in exceptional circumstances such as the commission of a serious crime.

"The real secret of Umno unity is that up to now, party members have upheld this tradition — that is, deciding the leadership at the second level and not the first level.

"This is the opinion of an American political scientist, Carl Von Vorys in his book on Malaysian politics.

"I believe this view is right because other countries which resolve the political leadership at the top level usually face a split

"I did not talk about these things before because I did not want people to say that I don't want anyone to challenge me.

"But now that I have been confirmed as the party leader, I can say these things," he said.