

Mahathir warns of threats at election

JASIN, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Umno members should not succumb to threats from anyone at the party's Supreme Council election next month.

The Umno deputy president said as long as he was in power in the party, he would ensure that such threats were not carried out.

He was referring to complaints that some party leaders were keeping a black list of those who do not support them

in the election.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister, said he hopes the contest for seats in the Supreme Council would be carried out in a clean manner.

Speaking at the opening of the Jasin Umno Division delegates' conference at the Sekolah Iskandar Shah here, he said he was also interested in the election as he was a candidate himself.

In an apparent reference to Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Datuk Musa Hitam — the

two strong contenders for the deputy president's post — he said the two leaders should stand for both deputy president and vice president posts as the party needed them.

"Both candidates must stand for both seats and not just one candidate standing for both while the other stands for one," he added.

No problem

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said it would not create any problem if the candidate stood for both

posts.

He hoped Umno members would be able to close ranks after the election as the party needed to forge ahead and fulfil its objectives.

"There is no end to our struggle in uplifting the welfare of the people," he said.

He added that Umno was the premier political party in the country having been in power since before Merdeka.

In the early years, he said, the party's struggle was to oppose the Malayan Union.

Nowadays, the party

needed open-minded members as Umno was not only responsible for Malays but also for the country's security and development.

Umno must also look after the interests of non-Malays as they had made significant contributions towards the nation's development.

"Umno does not intend to suppress the non-Malays nor is the party a threat to them," he stressed.

He said the party must function in a responsible manner so as not to create chaos in the country.

He added that some people might notice a significant change in the tone of his speeches since he became a Cabinet Minister and Deputy Prime Minister.

At the time when he was not in the Cabinet, he said, the Malays were in a critical position socially and economically.

Malay students only accounted for 11 per cent of the total population in local Universities and the number of Malay professionals was very insignificant then, he said.

"Our struggle then was to achieve a balance between the Malays and non-Malays in the various fields."

Critical

He also urged party members to be active at all times and not just work only during the General Assembly.

Speaking to reporters later, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Tengku Razaleigh and Datuk Musa should inform the party headquarters if they decided to stand for both deputy president and vice president posts.

Asked whether he had spoken to either of them about standing for both posts, he said there was no need for him to make the suggestion personally to them. "I think they both read the newspapers," he added.

Also present at the conference were Datuk Musa, in his capacity as Malacca Umno liason chief, Chief Minister Mohamed Adib Adam and Enck Ghafar Baba, the MP for Jasin and an Umno vice president.

Earlier, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir laid the foundation stone for the Jasin Umno building.