

Backing for other side not big: PM

EST 14 APR 1987

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. —

Umno president Datuk Seri ~~Dr. Mahathir~~ Mohamad today refuted a suggestion that about half the Umno Ministers and Deputy Ministers would support Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and deputy president Datuk Musa Hitam at the April 24 party elections.

Dr Mahathir said his opponents had the support of four or five Ministers and Deputy Ministers at the most.

He was speaking at a Press conference after attending the 16th anniversary celebrations of Koperasi Shameelin Berhad at Wisma Tunku.

Campaign

He also confirmed that leave was granted to several Ministers involved in the campaign for party posts.

Asked whether any Minister had resigned, he said: "They only applied for leave."

Asked if he would take leave to campaign for his re-election to the top party post, he said he would not. "I have lots of work to do."

On an allegation that Datuk Musa was prevented from meeting Umno delegates in Kedah last Friday, Dr Mahathir said it was not true.

"I asked Datuk Paduka Othman Aroff (Menteri Besar and State Umno Liaison Chief) whether this was true and he said the timing of Datuk Musa's trip was not right.

"On that day, Datuk Othman and a group went to Perak to attend the opening of the Umno building there.

"If Datuk Musa can re-schedule his visit, he will be able to meet the delegates."