

Door is open for talks on Umno unity

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By Antonius Tang

KOTA BARU, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah did not meet privately here, but both have kept the door open for further talks on party unity.

The Prime Minister said today he would welcome any intention by Tengku Razaleigh to see him again.

"Tengku Razaleigh can meet me ... no problem," he told reporters at the end of his two-day visit to Kelantan which was part of his "unity tour" of the peninsula.

Tengku Razaleigh had told reporters earlier that he was prepared to meet the Umno president "to build up co-operation in the party."

Yesterday, Tengku Razaleigh attended two meetings of the Kelantan Umno Liaison Committee in his capacity as the Gua Musang division head. Both sessions were chaired by Dr Mahathir.

It was the first time the two had been at a meeting together since the bruising April 24 elections.

when Dr Mahathir staved off a challenge for the top party post from Tengku Razaleigh.

Dr Mahathir said yesterday's meetings discussed "some problems facing the party" and Tengku Razaleigh "also took part."

On Tengku Razaleigh's statement that every capable party member should be brought in to help implement the New Economic Policy, Dr Mahathir said: "We welcome his opinion. This is what we want."

The party president said Tengku Razaleigh could meet him if he wanted to but that "it becomes a condition if he wants me to call him."

Asked whether he needed Tengku Razaleigh's help to strengthen the party, Dr Mahathir said: "We need everyone's help. If only one side is willing to help, it is not enough."

Dr Mahathir said there were no problems with party unity at the lower level.

"The rank and file do not give serious thought

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We must all be sincere: Razaleigh

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to matters like the election of leaders ... but those involved (in the party elections) and who were disappointed are not easy to coax back."

He said the "unity tour" had helped members understand better the party's problems.

At his home this morning, Tengku Razaleigh told reporters that he was "willing to help in whatever way I can ... I believe everybody should be brought in to share the responsibility."

He said there should not be any form of discrimination or victimisation (against those who supported him).

Tengku Razaleigh said he believed that the party was united. "We are strong and will grow stronger if we all work for it."

He added: "If there is any disunity, this is because of differences in affiliation. It should not be a problem getting members together to support a common cause."

He said unity could be strengthened if everyone "is fair and sincere."

Tengku Razaleigh said he looked forward to the "complete implementation" of the NEP.

"Towards this end, every capable personality must be brought in to work together. There must be co-operation."

Tengku Razaleigh later left for Kuala Lumpur.