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MAHATHIR-POST

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KOTA BAHARU, SEPT 29 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY HE WAS PREPARED TO RELINQUISH HIS POST AS PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE OF AGE BUT HIS COMPATRIOTS WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO DO SO.

+I AM PREPARED TO WITHDRAW NOW BUT FRIENDS DO NOT ALLOW IT,+ HE TOLD A GROUP OF UMNO VETERANS IN KELANTAN.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO IS ALMOST 65, SAID HE REALISED HIS AGE WOULD MAKE HIM A VETERAN, LIKE MANY OF THOSE PRESENT WHO WERE HIS CONTEMPORARIES IN THE UMNO STRUGGLE.

IN LIGHTER VEIN, HE SAID HIS TWO-DAY VISIT TO KELANTAN WAS TIRING... +IT IS TIRING MOVING FROM HERE TO THERE AND MAKING AS MANY AS SIX SPEECHES.+

REITERATING HIS DESIRE TO RESIGN, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO RELATED EFFORTS BY SEMANGAT 46 LEADER TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH IN OPPOSING HIM.

+IT IS NOT THAT I DO NOT WANT TO RESIGN BUT PEOPLE DO NOT ALLOW IT,+ HE SAID. -- MORE
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HE SAID IN THE CASE OF OTHER APPOINTMENTS, LIKE A JUDGE, ONE COULD QUALIFY FOR PENSION ON ATTAINING THE AGE OF 65 BUT IN POLITICS THERE WAS AN EXCEPTION.

+IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT OLD PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO GO BUT THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS A YOUNG MAN WHO IS TOO IMPATIENT TO WAIT FOR ME, HE ADDED IN JEST.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID HE AGREED WITH THE OPINION OF HIS COMRADES IN UMNO THAT MALAY UNITY STILL NEEDED TO BE STRENGTHENED AND THE PARTY STRUGGLE HAD TO GO ON.

YOUNG UMNO MEMBERS NEEDED GUIDANCE TO CONTINUE THE PARTY'S STRUGGLE, HE ADDED.

HE SAID WHEN A PERSON WAS CONSIDERED A VETERAN POLITICIAN IT DID NOT MEAN HE HAD RETIRED AND COULD NOT BE ACTIVE.

ALTHOUGH ONE WAS PHYSICALLY OLD THE SPIRIT OF THE STRUGGLE MUST BE MAINTAINED BECAUSE EXPERIENCE WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR, HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE MEETING WAS AIMED AT REMINDING VETERAN POLITICIANS OF THE NEED FOR CONTINUED EFFORTS IN UMNO WHICH HAD DONE MUCH FOR THE MALAYS. -- BERNAMA

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