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Mahathir-Post

ANWAR WILL NOT CONTEST UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S POST, SAYS MAHATHIR

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 11 (Bernama) -- UMNO Vice president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will not contest for the post of Deputy President at the party's general assembly in November, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister, who is UMNO President, said Anwar had already stated his stand.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the UMNO Supreme Council meeting here, Dr Mahathir said as far as he knew the post of President would also not be contested.

The Supreme Council agreed that only the three posts of vice-president and Supreme Council seats would be contested, he added.

He said: "There might be people who say this is undemocratic and that sort of thing but if there is no need to contest although we are democratic, then don't contest."

"We do not have to contest simply because we are democratic."

In the interest of stability, the Supreme Council felt that for the time being it would be better if there was no contest for the posts of President and Deputy President.

But if there were people who still wanted to contest, the party could not do anything about it, he added. -- more

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Repeating with additional 3rd and 4th grafs

Mahathir-Post 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said there was still talk at the lower levels that he had given his blessings to the campaigning for the post of Deputy President although there would be no contest.

"This is totally untrue. I have never given consent to anyone to contest for the post of Deputy President," he added.

He urged those people to immediately cease what they were doing.

If there were any groups interested in nominating candidates for the post, they would not be accepted and it would be waste of their time, he added.

He said UMNO was stable and any view that the party was split into two or three was expressed by people who were unsympathetic to the party and wanted to see it in turmoil.

Newsmen were happy if there was turmoil because it would provide them a trove of material for stories, he added.

As example, he cited the peaceful conduct of the UN-supervised general election in Cambodia where the mass media were so disappointed that there were no killings.

"I hope newspapers in Malaysia do not depend on such excitement. We do not have such excitement," he said.

Dr Mahathir said UMNO members were rational people and none of them were interested in grabbing power.

"The type who grab power have left. We welcome them to remain outside the party," he added. -- Bernama

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Approached by reporters, Anwar said he had no further statement to make on the matter and that there was no change in his previous statement of not intending to contest the post.

"I'm puzzled why it's news to you," he said as he was leaving the UMNO headquarters.

Asked if he expected UMNO members would still ask him to contest, Anwar, who is Finance Minister, said: "The question is irrelevant."

Another vice-president, Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, said Dr Mahathir had mentioned about the "no-contest" for the number two post at the last Supreme Council meeting.

However, as the Prime Minister did not speak about it at the post-meeting press conference then, there seemed to be some "confusion" on the issue at the ground level.

"Obviously because of this confusion, the Prime Minister decided to make himself very clear today," he said. -- Bernama

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