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Mahathir-Umno

MAHATHIR HITS OUT AT "SELFISH" UMNO MEMBERS

KUALA LUMPUR, June 22 (Bernama) -- Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today those who are campaigning to get Umno divisions to nominate Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for the post of deputy president in the Umno elections are working for their own interests.

"These people are working for themselves," the prime minister said at the airport on his return from a 10-day official visit to China.

"These people are hoping that if their boss goes up, they too can go up. That is all," he said when asked to comment on statements by several leaders who wanted a contest for the post with a view to honouring the wishes of party members.

The Umno Supreme Council had decided earlier that there should not be any contest for the posts of president and deputy president.

Dr Mahathir said those involved in the campaign were very selfish. "

Responding to a question, he said he had no advice for these people.

"I have no advice for them. It's a waste of time...I have advised a hundred times," he said. -- more

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"They are not supporting Anwar but only themselves," Dr Mahathir said. Anwar, who is an Umno vice-president, has declared that he will not challenge incumbent deputy president Ghafar Baba in the November party elections.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said upholding democracy did not mean that there must be a contest.

"To contest just for the sake of contesting is a waste of effort," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said he did not agree with the suggestion by the Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat, Tan Sri Zahir Ismail, that the two-thirds majority vote for amending the Federal Constitution be replaced with a simple majority in Parliament.

He said the two-thirds majority requirement should be retained to protect the interests of the minority.

If it was done away with, the rights of the minority as enshrined in the Constitution would be challenged, he said.

On his visit to China, Dr Mahathir said he hoped that the private sector would take follow-up action to implement the agreements and memorandums of understanding reached with China.

He said the government would give the necessary support to the companies involved.

Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba led a large group of people to welcome home the prime minister.

Badminton star Cheah Soon Kit was at the airport to present his SEA Games gold medal to the Prime Minister's wife, Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah.

Cheah said he and Soo Beng Kiang won the medal for Dr Siti Hasmah who he said was their main motivating force. -- Bernama

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