

# PM: No need to contest for sake of contesting

By ROHAIZAD A RAHIM

PETALING JAYA: Umno leaders must have a valid reason to contest any post in the November elections, said Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said it would be a wasted effort if the leaders were to contest for the sake of contesting.

"What can cause damage (to the party) is this (contesting for the sake of contesting)," he told reporters on his return from China.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on reports quoting Umno leaders as saying his announcement on June 12 — that vice-president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim would not challenge incumbent deputy president Abdul Ghafar Baba — was not intended to prevent divisions from

nominating anybody for the deputy president's post.

On June 16, Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Rahim Thamby Chik said Dr Mahathir's announcement should be regarded as a guideline.

Rahim said leaders who received nominations for a certain post from more than 35 per cent of party divisions must contest the post as it was a mandate from the members.

On a similar note, Umno Youth information chief Senator Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Dr Mahathir's announcement was not meant to prevent any divisions from nominating Anwar to contest the post.

Dr Mahathir said the fact there would be no contest for the top two posts did not mean it was undemocratic.

"Democracy does not require us to contest if

there is no real need to contest," he said.

Dr Mahathir said those who continued to campaign for nominations for Anwar were being selfish.

"These people work for themselves as they think that if their boss (Anwar) goes up, so would they," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said there was a need to retain two-thirds majority in Parliament instead of a simple majority as proposed by Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Zahir Ismail.

He said this would ensure that the minority in the House would not suspect that the Government was trying to abuse its rights.

He was met at the airport by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba, and senior Cabinet ministers.

23 JUN 1995