

# PM: I will stay neutral if there's a contest

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. —  
Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will remain neutral in the event of a contest for the party's deputy president post.

The Prime Minister reiterated his earlier stand that, if possible, he would not want a contest for the post. But if members decide otherwise, they should strive to help maintain party unity.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the likelihood of a contest for Umno's number two post at the party's general assembly in November.

"I am neutral...I have to be neutral. I cannot come out in support of any candidate because I must remain neutral.

"If I give my support, it will result in the side that I do not support rejecting my advice."

Asked whether Umno leaders would work out a "compromise" so that there would not be a contest for the post, Dr Mahathir said the matter did not arise.

He said: "We don't have any problem, so why should there be a compromise. I don't know why people are excited."

Dr Mahathir was asked these questions by reporters after officiating the 40th MIC general assembly here.

Dr Mahathir said when Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim stated that he would not be vying for the number two party position, he had welcomed that stand.

"But if he changes his mind, that is up to him."

On the foreign media news coverage, Dr Mahathir said the foreign media were biased in their reporting.

"They always criticise us. We are not asking them to praise us but the reports must be factual," he said.

He said the foreign media accused the Government of controlling the local media, adding that in actual fact the Western media were controlled by their owners.