

CNS8064

U PE 13-09 00199 EG011

aae

Mahathir-deputy

MAHATHIR SAYS HE ALONE CAN'T STOP ANWAR-GHAFAR CLASH

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he alone could not avert a contest for the Umno deputy presidency in the party elections in November.

"It's up to the Umno leadership ... the Umno leadership is not just me alone," said Dr Mahathir who is Umno president.

He was speaking to reporters after opening the 14th Commonwealth Forestry Conference at the Shangri-La here.

Dr Mahathir was asked whether the Umno leadership would make efforts to avert a contest for the deputy president's post with the overwhelming nominations for Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as against those for the incumbent and Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba.

As of yesterday, Anwar, who is an Umno vice-president, secured 81 nominations against Ghafar's six after 87 of the 153 Umno divisions had completed their delegates' conferences.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the Umno Supreme Council whether to discuss this development at its meeting before the party's general assembly. -- more

AZZ RN

▼13/09/15-07MST

U PE 13-09 00158 EG012

aae

Mahathir-deputy 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir reiterated his neutral stand in the Umno elections when a reporter asked whether the Prime Minister thought Anwar was more qualified than Ghafar to assist him in realising Vision 2020.

Vision 2020 is a national objective to make Malaysia an industrialised nation by year 2020.

"I can't make a judgement, all the people say he can help....if he can't naturally he would not even contest.

"It's up to the members to decide. Don't ask me.

"I am neutral," he said and jestingly referred to a similar quip in cartoonist Lat's caricature of the Prime Minister and his wife in today's New Straits Times newspaper.

Dr Mahathir also said he was actually referring to the contest for Umno divisional posts when he recently stated that those with slim chances of winning should not contest. -- more

AZZ RN

▼13/09/15-30MST

CNS8123

U PE 13-09 00186 EG013

aae

Mahathir-deputy 3 (last) Kuala Lumpur

"I was talking about division chiefs and about my ownself," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he issued the reminder because too many people had wanted to be division heads so much so even the "no-hopers" were also joining the fray.

He was also asked whether the same reminder could be applied to the coming Anwar-Ghafar contest because of the sizeable difference between nominations for the challenger and the incumbent.

Dr Mahathir replied that he himself had a similar experience of getting substantial nominations on the eve of party elections.

"In 1987, I received 80 per cent of the divisional nominations but I only won by 43 votes," he said referring to the contest for the Umno presidency between him and his challenger, the former Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

He said it was because of this that Umno now allocates 10 "grassroot votes" for each nomination for president and deputy president so that the nominees effectively benefit from the exercise. -- Bernama

AZZ RN

♥13/09/16-16MST