

UMNO-Oust

THERE'S NO MOVE TO OUST MAHATHIR, SAYS NAJIB

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KUANTAN, Oct. 7 (Bernama) -- The tide of change taking place in UMNO is to safeguard and strengthen the leadership of party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, not to oust him, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

The UMNO Youth head, who is the leading nominee for one of the three posts of vice president in the party elections in November, said: "There are rumours deliberately created by irresponsible people that the tide and winds of change over the next 18 months would oust Dr Mahathir's leadership.

"I must make it clear that there's not an iota of intention, not even any plot towards ousting Dr Mahathir; in fact, the tide is to safeguard and strengthen his leadership in the years ahead.

"If it is to the contrary, I pray those who are loyal to Dr Mahathir will not participate in such a scheme."

Najib, the Defence Minister, was addressing about 500 people at a dinner for UMNO leaders organised by Pahang UMNO Liaison Committee here last night.

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Among them were Pahang UMNO Liaison Committee chairman Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, two other vice-presidential nominees Johor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, Melaka Menteri Besar Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik, who has been nominated for the post of UMNO Youth chief, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, Pulau Pinang Deputy Chief Minister Dr Ibrahim Saad, several Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries.

Muhyiddin, Muhammad Taib and Khalil, the Pahang Menteri Besar, who also addressed the gathering, also spoke about the absence of any move by the "Vision Team", a name given to the group running for posts in the party elections in November, to oust Dr Mahathir and also voiced support for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in his contest for the post of Deputy President.

Najib said, in facing the elections, the question of discarding certain leaders did not arise. "What is important to us is the election of a leader whose ability to lead is proven, in step with the times and situation today," he added. -- more

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Khalil said the team had considered the need to strengthen the position of the party president and protect it from falsehoods contained in poison pen letters when the team initiated the move to bring change to the party leadership.

When heads of the state UMNO liaison committees expressed their support for Anwar, they had prior to that stated that the tide of change would not affect the position of the president, he added.

"We support Anwar because we know he is the No.2 person who can strengthen the position of the party president," he said. -- Bernama

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