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Mahathir-Mustapha

DR M NOT INFORMED OF MUSTAPHA'S DECISION TO QUIT

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KEMAMAN, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he had not been informed by anyone that Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun may resign as Minister for Sabah Affairs and deputy head of the Sabah Umno Liaison Committee.

He could only comment on the matter if he had been informed of it, he told reporters when asked about news reports today that Mustapha had indicated he might quit.

The reports today quoted Mustapha as having said he might resign from the two posts, a decision made apparently owing to disappointment over Umno's appointment of Land and Cooperative Development Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai as head of the Sabah Umno Liaison Committee last Saturday in place of Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba who had stepped down from the post on Sept 30.

Reacting to the news reports, several Umno leaders appealed to Mustapha to reconsider his decision, saying the party still needed his services.

Foreign Minister and Umno vice-president Datuk Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi said he hoped that Mustapha would remain in Umno and the government.

He said Umno's struggle in Sabah had not been completed and that the party machinery in the state required Mustapha's leadership. -- more

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Law Minister and Umno supreme council member Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said he hoped that Mustapha would give priority to the future of Sabah Umno and its struggle to win in the next election.

He said Umno had never intended to belittle the role of Mustapha when it appointed Sakaran to head Sabah Umno.

Johor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said he hoped that Mustapha would consider the party's interest before coming to a final decision.

Four Sabah Umno divisional leaders appealed to Mustapha to reconsider his decision to quit, saying his services were required to resolve the problems in Sabah.

Kimanis division head Senator John Ghani said he would try to meet Mustapha to discuss the matter. Tanjung Aru division head and Sabah Umno Liaison Committee secretary Yahya Hussein said Mustapha should give priority to unity.

Kota Belud division head Datuk Salleh Tun Mohd Said said Sakaran's appointment did not mean that Umno leaders in Sabah had no confidence in Mustapha's leadership. Padas division head Dr Yusof Yaacob said Sabah Umno still required the services of Mustapha. -- Bernama

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