

Dr M warns Umno members of effects if

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By K. Bala

LANGKAWI, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned Umno members that the party would be destroyed if nonsensical people motivated by personal interests were elected to hold office.

The Prime Minister, who is Umno president, said members should be careful and wise when electing leaders at all levels. They should elect only capable leaders, he said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to questions from reporters on the trend in the on-going Umno divisional elections where party interests were being sacrificed in certain cases.

If good leaders were elected, then the interests of the party would be safeguarded, he said.

"But in the case of Merbok (Umno divisional contest), nonsensical people (*orang yang bukan-bukan*) are being nominated to contest.

"They (the contestants) give all sorts of conditions. If they don't get what they ask for they get angry.

"If Umno is led by such people, then the party will be destroyed," he added.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after visiting projects being completed for the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition (Lima '95) in December.

The Prime Minister was obviously referring to the conditions set by National Ex-servicemen's Association president Senator Datuk Zainol Abidin Johari for him to withdraw from contesting the Merbok Umno divisional chief's post to pave the way for Economic Adviser Tun Daim Zainuddin to continue heading the division.

The first condition set by Zainol Abidin was for Daim to ensure that he (Zainol Abidin) was not challenged for the deputy head's post.

Zainol Abidin had also suggested that Tanjung Dawai Assemblyman and pro-tem divisional chief Badri Yunus be unchallenged as the vice-chief.

Zainol Abidin also wanted the right to appoint the divisional secretary, treasurer and information

chief.

The former State Parti Melayu Semangat 46 chairman said on Friday that he had written to Dr Mahathir stating his conditions for withdrawing from the contest.

Daim resigned as the Merbok pro-tem chief on Aug 15 to pave the way for new faces to lead the division.

However, leaders at divisional and branch levels persuaded the Umno treasurer to reconsider his decision. But Daim decided not to accept offers to defend his post.

The contest for the division's top post would now be between Zainol Abidin and Badri since the third contender, Jamaluddin Che Tam, has withdrawn to contest for the vice-head's post.

On his visit to Pulau Dayang Bunting, Dr Mahathir said the island would be provided with more facilities. Among the island's attractions is a fresh water lake.

The "lake of the pregnant maiden" is popular among visitors. Folklore has it that a couple who had remained childless for 19 years drank water from the lake and was blessed with a baby girl.

Besides the beautification of the lake, named after the island, there will also be clinics and health centres, the Prime Minister said.

During his eight-hour stay here, Dr Mahathir also visited the Aqua Bay, the first phase of the RM1 billion Port Langkasuka project which will be the venue for Lima maritime exhibits, the Gallery Perdana, which will house State gifts and awards bestowed on Dr Mahathir, the Dataran Lang or Eagle Square and the new office headquarters of the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada).

A RM29.6 million office cum commercial complex in Kuah will open on Oct 15. Among its facilities are a multi purpose hall and an open air stage.

Earlier, on arrival, Dr Mahathir inspected the new airport terminal building operational two weeks ago.

Dr Mahathir expressed satisfaction with the progress of the projects.

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