

12 OCT 1996

Umno-Contest

STILL TOO EARLY TO DECIDE ON CONTEST, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today it is too early for him and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to decide whether they will contest for the president and deputy president posts in the next party elections in 1999.

"I don't know whether we may, June or July," he said in jest to a question at a news conference whether he and his deputy may or will contest in the next party elections.

"Why should we look so far ahead? It (contest) is still far away. In the meantime we want to concentrate on doing what we are supposed to do," he told reporters at the end of the party's general assembly here.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir had said he and Anwar were willing to have a contest for their respective post in the next party elections provided it is clean.

However, he said, some people will dirty the contest.

Anwar, who was present at the news conference, said he gives his total and complete loyalty to Dr Mahathir, whom he respects as his leader.

He said he had clarified to the Umno clubs formed by Malaysian students abroad that there was no such thing as "Mahathir camp or Anwar camp" as reported by the foreign press.

He was responding to a question on his meeting with 23 Umno club representatives who had asked about the reports of "Mahathir camp and Anwar camp" when they met him here today.

Anwar said he explained to them that Umno members and leaders worked as a team with Dr Mahathir as their head.

"Even though those personalities (who won in the party elections) are closely associated with me, I have a total and complete loyalty to Dr Mahathir. Therefore, the press reports are irrelevant," he said.

Dr Mahathir quipped: "Actually, Malaysia is a dull place for foreign journalists. In other countries their prime minister or president keeps changing, but here we are dull people. That is why we don't have many foreign journalists." -- BERNAMA

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