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Mahathir-Anwar

TENGGU RAZALEIGH'S RETURN NOT TO CHECK ANWAR'S INFLUENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed allegations that he wants Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to return to Umno to check the influence of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the party and government.

"I have no intention to get Datuk Seri Anwar replaced as Umno deputy president or to deny him the right to be the Prime Minister when I retire," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, told reporters this after chairing the Umno Supreme Council monthly meeting at Menara Datuk Onn in Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said he wished to make known his firm stand following talk that he wanted Tengku Razaleigh, who is Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) president, to rejoin Umno in order to check, undermine and subvert Anwar's influence in the party and government.

"So the entry of Tengku Razaleigh has nothing whatsoever to do with this matter and I also hope Tengku Razaleigh does not believe that my aim of accepting him is to check the position of Datuk Seri Anwar," he said.

Dr Mahathir said his relationship with Anwar, who is Deputy Prime Minister, was not only very good but could be described as excellent because they met almost daily to discuss government and party matters.

"I fully support my deputy and his role, and I am confident that when I retire one day my deputy will take over in accordance with the Umno tradition," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the notion that Tengku Razaleigh's return was meant to check Anwar's influence was not only reported by the foreign media but such talk already prevailed among some Umno and S46 members.

Asked whether the foreign media reports might be based on the fact that his two deputies before Anwar had resigned, he said: "That's not my fault."

He said Tan Sri Musa Hitam resigned his post on his own accord while Tun Ghafar Baba quit because he was challenged for the party post.

"Datuk Musa (then a Datuk) wanted to resign. What could I do when he himself wanted to quit? In the case of Tun Ghafar there was a contest and I could not stop it. So, it was not I who made them resign," he said. --

BERNAMA

AH YBY JK