

Continue to lead, info chiefs urge Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: All state and division Umno information chiefs have called on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad not to step down but to continue leading the party.

Umno information chief Datuk Dr Yusof Nor said the party president received a standing ovation at the end of his speech to the participants of a one-day course for the party's division information chiefs yesterday.

"The participants have expressed their view of wanting Dr Mahathir to continue leading the party, especially during the current troubled times," he told reporters after the closing of the closed-door course.

According to some participants, during the speech, Dr Mahathir had mentioned that he was already 73 years old and he was thinking of retiring from politics.

It was at that moment when the participants called on Dr Mahathir to continue leading the party.

Dr Yusof said Dr Mahathir also explained strategies to strengthen the party, particularly in combating the opposition's propaganda through the PAS-led Majlis Gerakan Keadilan Ra-

kyat Malaysia (Gerak).

He said Dr Mahathir also called on party members to work harder to counter Gerak's propaganda, including the using of non-governmental organisations, to divide the Malays.

Meanwhile in Johor Baru, Umno leaders expressed support for the decision to do away with the 10 bonus votes per nomination for the top two posts during party elections yesterday.

Johor Umno liaison chief Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said this will reduce the intense politicking during nomination.

He said the system had, in the past, led to various problems during the nomination process when candidates had gone overboard in order to win nominations.

On Tuesday, the supreme council agreed to do away with the system and also agreed that only those who secured substantial nominations would qualify to contest in the party elections.

Ghani said setting a minimum 25% nomination requirement for candidates was a good measure to balance out the problem of non-serious contenders during party elections.