

20/06/1998

Mohamed Ali won't say if he will seek Youth post

DEPUTY Transport Minister and supreme council member Datuk Mohamed Ali Rustam is non-committal on whether he would challenge Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in next year's party election.

"I have not given it any thought yet," he replied when asked by reporters to confirm talks that he would offer himself as a candidate for the movement's top post.

Mohamed Ali laughed when it was pointed out that his reluctance to rule out challenging Zahid, indicated that he might do so.

Yesterday, Kuantan Umno Youth leader Abdul Hamid Mohd Azhar, while debating the resolution on economy at the Youth assembly, had, on a light note, said Mohamed Ali, being the head of the World Youth body, might be considered a suitable candidate to lead Umno Youth.

Mohamed Ali said members should not be preoccupied with next year's party elections as there were more pressing matters now like addressing the nation's economic problems and enhancing party unity.

On the presidential address, Mohamed Ali said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad highlighted the importance of Malaysians not falling prey to external attempts to colonise the country again.

"They are saying that we are to be blamed for our economic woes and trying to shift attention from the truth, which is the role of currency traders in undermining the region's economies.

"They wanted us to get the blame while they continued making a fortune out of our misery," he added.

On Umno Youth's criticism against the practices of nepotism and cronyism, Mohamed Ali said there were bigger issues on hand that needed to be resolved.

"We should not be trapped by such issues. They say Suharto practised nepotism and cronyism which contributed to the collapse of the Indonesian economy.

"But how about Thailand and the Philippines whose economies are also suffering? Does this mean they are also involved in nepotism and cronyism?"

He said the West also practised cronyism like supporting countries which they liked and suppressing those, like Malaysia, which dared to go against them.

(END)