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Umno-Mokhzani

MOKHZANI MAHATHIR SAYS ZAHID'S CRITICISMS ARE WELL INTENDED

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Merbok Umno division Youth chief Mokhzani Mahathir said today family ties or friendship should be the last criterion when deciding on business opportunities.

However, a person who was qualified should not be denied the opportunities merely because he had family ties with those with the authority to approve projects, said the prime minister's son.

"Family ties cannot be severed. If a person is capable and can perform his duties properly, he should not be denied the opportunities," he told reporters after the simultaneous opening of the Umno Youth and Wanita Umno assemblies here.

Mokhzani was asked to comment on the statement by Umno Youth Chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamid on the practice of favouring relatives and friends when awarding business opportunities.

Zahid, in his policy speech at the assembly, had also called for transparency in government efforts to help big companies hit by the economic slowdown, so as not to affect the people's confidence in the government.

Mokhzani said Zahid's criticism of nepotism and cronyism practices were made with good intentions to correct the present situation.

He said it was made not with the intention to question the policies formulated and practised by the government but to overcome weaknesses in their implementation.

Mokhzani, who is also the Umno Youth assistant treasurer, acknowledged that his reactions were often watched by the movement's executive committee members when discussing about nepotism and cronyism.

"But after discussing with the exco members, we are satisfied that the criticisms are right," he said.

On Zahid's statement that he (Mokhzani) was the bridge between Umno Youth and party president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Mokhzani said that was not a new "duty" for him.

"Whenever I'm asked by the Youth chief (Zahid) to arrange a meeting with the president, I'll phone home. In fact I know that if the Youth chief has any problem or matter to discuss, the president will allocate time for a meeting," he said.

Mokhzani said contrary to what many people think, the relationship between Zahid and Dr Mahathir was good, and the prime minister was always ready to meet the Youth chief.

-- BERNAMA

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