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NAJIB NOT CONTESTING DEPUTY PRESIDENCY

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today announced that he will not contest for the party's number two post in next year's Umno elections.

"I will not contest," he told reporters when approached to comment on talk of him standing for the Umno deputy presidency now held by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"I support the president and deputy president," he said at the Putra World Trade Centre, where he is attending the party's 52nd general assembly now into its second day.

Asked whether he would defend his present party position, Najib said: "Most probably... but now it's not the time to make any announcement."

On Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that he would support Anwar in the event of the incumbent being challenged in next year's Umno elections, Najib said he endorsed the statement.

Najib said Umno took Dr Mahathir's statement positively as it reflected the wishes of members desiring understanding and unity in the party.

"The members see the posts of president and deputy president as the symbol of Umno unity," he said.

Najib said Dr Mahathir's statement would put an end to unhealthy talk about their (Dr Mahathir and Anwar's) relationship.

-- BERNAMA

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