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MB-Contest

STATE UMNO LEADERS WANT MAHATHIR AND ANWAR TO STAY ON

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- State Umno leaders today expressed their support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to remain as party president and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as deputy president.

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said menteris besar and chief ministers had taken a united stand to support Dr Mahathir and Anwar if they were challenged.

This was confirmed by other state leaders approached by reporters at the Umno general assembly here.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said he would support Anwar if the latter was challenged for the deputy presidency next year, while Anwar said he supported Dr Mahathir and had never expressed any intention of challenging the Prime Minister.

Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin said the state Umno was in total support of Dr Mahathir and Anwar staying on as party president and deputy president.

"Melaka does not want any contest for the two posts, but the vice-president's posts should be open for contest as there are many contenders," he said.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said yesterday's statements by Dr Mahathir and Anwar were a clear indication that the two leaders were close and supported one another.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad said there should not be any contests for the top two posts so that they could concentrate on restoring the country's economy.

Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said yesterday's expression of support for Anwar by Dr Mahathir was not the first as the Prime Minister had previously stated that Anwar would be his successor.

Former Finance Minister and Gua Musang Umno division chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said he supported the call for the top two leaders to stay on as it would help to strengthen the party to cope with the current economic problems.

--BERNAMA

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