

06 mar 2000

Muhammad-MT

AWKWARD, SAYS MUHAMMAD WHO ATTENDED MT MEETING

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 (Bernama) -- Former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhamad Taib who was allowed to attend the Umno Supreme Council (MT) meeting today after being on leave for three years thanked the party president and MT members for giving him the opportunity to attend the meeting.

In expressing gratitude, he promised to continue to strive to assist the party to become stronger.

"During the three years, I had the opportunity to appreciate the deeds of the party to the Malays who had benefited much and I have developed a deep sense of loyalty and wish to continue to serve the party regardless whether I have any post or otherwise," he told reporters after being allowed to attend the MT meeting again after being on leave for three years.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at the MT meeting on Feb 17, announced that Muhammad, who was given leave from performing his duties as Umno vice-president, would be allowed to attend the MT meeting again after his appeal (to attend the MT meeting) was accepted.

Muhammad, 53, resigned as Selangor Menteri Besar in April 1997 following the court cases he was facing and was later allowed leave from discharging his duties as Umno vice-president.

Muhammad's problems started with his detention at the Brisbane Airport, Australia at the end of 1996 for failing to declare cash in various currencies totalling RM2.7 million.

In May 1998, the Brisbane Court acquitted Muhammad, who was Umno vice-president since 1993, of all charges.

On April 10 last year, the Attorney-General decided not to appeal against the High Court decision here which acquitted Muhammad of the charge of failing to declare his assets and that of his families'.

Last year, the MT did not allow Muhammad to contest for Umno posts at the branch and divisional levels as he was still facing the court case then.

When asked about his feeling on attending the MT meeting again, Muhammad said: "Quite awkward...after three years...just like a divorced person who wants to reconcile...meet again."

"The first day...rather awkward. But I know my colleagues in the Supreme Council. There is no problem at all," he said.

Asked on the Umno divisions which had so far not nominated him to defend the vice-president's post, he said he would accept whatever decision made by the Umno members.

"I hope in the next few weeks there will be some divisions which will give some consideration," said Muhammad who had earlier offered to defend the vice-president's post.

--BERNAMA

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