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No need to abolish deputy or vice-president posts, says Dr M

KUCHING, Mon. - There is no need to abolish the post of deputy president or the three vice-president posts in Umno as the existing leadership structure works, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said changing the structure would not make much of a difference although there may be other structures which were better.

Dr Mahathir said scrambles for party posts would continue as long as members were only greedy to secure positions and not contribute to the party,

"We will take the middle road since there are some proposals to abolish and some to add certain party posts.

"Therefore, we do not need to add or reduce (positions in Umno)", the Prime Minister told reporters after visiting the Ming Kiong fruit garden here owned by entrepreneur Tan Sri Ting Pek Khiing.

He was commenting on reports quoting Wanita Chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba who had proposed the scrapping of the three vice presidents posts and the deputy president's posts respectively.

Rafidah contended that the contest for the vice presidents was creating chaos which could weaken the party.

Ghafar, on the other hand, said the intense contests in Umno was for the deputy presidency and not for the three vice president posts.

He proposed that the party scrap the deputy presidency and increase the number of vice president to five with one of them picked as the deputy prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said despite some proposals to do away with posts and others defending the need to retain them, he believed if members held on to the democratic principles, contests for posts would not cause problems.

On Ghafar's statement, he said it was merely an opinion from him.

"We have to study whether abolishing the deputy president's post will end the scramble for positions besides the suggestion to scrap the vice presidency", he added.

On the culture of vying for posts in Umno which seemed to cause splits when there was a contest, Dr Mahathir said:

"The culture that we should uphold is to observe the democratic principles in which if we contest and lose, we will accept the decision of the majority and support whoever that won.

"If we lose and withdraw, then democracy will collapse. As time progress, more and more people would leave every time they lose when there is a contest. Finally, the party will not have members like now."

Dr Mahathir also criticised certain opinions which were openly aired, suggesting that it was alright to dabble in money politics.

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