

Don't use party leaders' names, says Mahathir

SUN 10 MAR 2001

Umno president tells of the use of 'mama tactic' by candidates

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: Candidates contesting for posts of Umno division heads should not use the names of party leaders to gain the support of members, its president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Whether or not a candidate is elected should be up to him and not because of any association with a party leader, he said.

"Some candidates are saying they are the candidates chosen by the party president. Some are saying they have the approval of the president through mama ... my wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at party headquarters here.

One person has, thus far, reportedly been using the "mama tactic" and such cases of misconduct will first be investigated before action is taken, Mahathir said.

He said it is also not the party's policy for someone who has been appointed to a government post to contest for a division position.

"But, if they want to contest, then it is their right to do so," Mahathir said.

For example, if someone is a state assemblyman, it is not necessary for him to contest in the party election as he is

already serving the people through the state assembly.

On other complaints regarding party elections, Mahathir said candidates are always complaining about their rivals using money politics.

"So far, this is not happening. This year's party elections appear to be better than the previous (elections)," he said.

Mahathir also announced that the age limit for Puteri Umno chief has been raised to 40 years.

The previous age limit had

been set at 35 for all members of the new wing, but this has been revised specifically for the chief as finding a qualified candidate to head the movement is posing a problem.

Mahathir said those who are interested in joining Puteri Umno should write to or approach party headquarters directly in order to be considered for positions in the movement.

On the issue of the rotation system for the chief minister's post in Sabah, Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said

he is holding meetings and asking for written reports from all Sabah BN component parties.

"I have yet to meet all the leaders. I will make a decision as soon as possible," he said, adding that the decision made must be for the good of the state and its development as well as for the interests of BN and its component parties in the state.

"All this will be taken into consideration. The interests of the people of Sabah is, of course, of the utmost importance," Mahathir said.