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Mahathir-Umno

DO NOT THROW NAMES OF LEADERS TO CONTEST, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded candidates aspiring to contest in the Umno divisional elections not to throw names of party leaders to win support.

The prime minister said they should contest on their own strength and not become candidates for a certain party.

"We urge those wishing to contest not to use names of leaders, there are some who claim they are the president's candidates, there are some who claim they are candidates who had received the blessing of the president through "mama", that is my wife," he said at a media conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters, here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said so far the party headquarters had received one report on the use of party leaders' names for the purpose of contesting in the party election.

"I (myself) don't know that my wife is called mama," he said smilingly.

Dr Mahathir said candidates should not use his name or that of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi or any other leaders for the purpose of contesting in the election.

The Supreme Council also decided today that anyone holding position in the government should not necessarily contest for positions in the division if they did not hold any divisional post presently.

"If they already hold any position, then it is their right, but the perception that anyone holding position in the government must also hold position in the party, that is not the Umno party policy," he said.

He said for those people concerned, it was alright if they did not contest.

Asked whether the party headquarters had received any complaint about other malpractices in the Umno divisional elections, Dr Mahathir said: "There are, everyone is saying that their challengers are using money, but both sides make the same allegations.

"But I don't think much money is being used, maybe they spend some money on drinks (coffee), so far there is no proof, the election this time around appears to be slightly better," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the Supreme Council decided today to extend the age limit to 40 for anyone holding the post of Puteri Umno head.

However, the age limit for other members in Puteri Umno remains at 35.

Meanwhile, Wanita Umno head Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz urged those interested in contributing to Umno through Puteri Umno to join the movement.

She said the movement had so far received one name from a businesswoman who had expressed interest to join Puteri and was waiting for more names so that a protem committee could be formed.

Rafidah, who is also International Trade and Industry Minister, said at the moment more women were interested to join Wanita Umno and it was rather difficult to find new members within the Puteri age group to join the new movement.

-- BERNAMA

AFY MS SHS AO