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Mahathir-Campaign

WE NEITHER ENDORSE NOR OPPOSE ANY CANDIDATE- DR MAHATHIR

IPOH, April 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister and Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had neither endorsed nor opposed any candidate vying for posts in the current Umno Divisional elections.

"The candidates should vie for the posts based on their own performance and not depend on any names," he told reporters at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport here at the end of his two-day visit to Perak.

Umno Secretary-General Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali were also present.

Dr Mahathir said he wanted the best candidate to win in the election -- the candidate who did not use unacceptable methods to become head.

On his visit to Parit Buntar, Bagan Serai and Parit yesterday, the Prime Minister said he had listened to the people's problems in the three areas.

"During the dialogue they raised their problems and we now know their problems. We have to listen to their problems before we can take action," he said.

Dr Mahathir said from his visit to the three places, he gathered that the people generally had no problems in supporting Umno.

"They only want certain development there," he said.

In the General Election of Nov 29, 1999, PAS won the Parliamentary seats of Parit Buntar and Parit and also captured the Titi Serong state seat in the Bagan Serai Parliamentary constituency.

"I went there not because they are in opposition areas but I felt that is a good place to visit to give a boost to Umno in the area, which was a little disappointed because it lost in the last election," Dr Mahathir said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad also said the formation of Puteri Umno was not aimed at creating another group for women within Umno apart from Wanita Umno.

"The aim of having Puteri Umno is to expand women's involvement in Umno. It was set up to attract more young women to join Umno," he said.

The Prime Minister said Wanita Umno had no problems over the formation of Puteri Umno and had accepted its inception in good faith as it provided a choice to women aged below 35 as to whether to join Puteri Umno or Wanita Umno.

Women joining Puteri Umno would be briefed on the Umno spirit and tradition so that they would be aware of the Umno struggle, he said.

"Those joining Puteri Umno will form the next line of leaders and will take over the Wanita Umno leadership when its present leaders become older," Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister said that the point raised by Wanita Umno head Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz recently was that Puteri Umno should not just recruit members from the existing Wanita Umno movement but rather look for new members as Umno wanted to increase its membership.

"If they just take members of Wanita Umno, there will be no increase in the Umno membership. This is what the Wanita Umno head meant," he said.

-- BERNAMA

KAY MAI AAM

