

Dollah: Stop rumours about Mustapa

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By MENG YEW CHOONG

JELI: Kumour-mongering about an attempt to dethrone Datuk Mustapa Mohamed as Kelantan Wmno chief should stop immediately, said Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Speaking to reporters after opening the Jeli division meeting here yesterday, Abdullah said the issue had given rise to much controversy in Kelantan Umno following a front page report in an English daily last week alleging that 12 of the 14 division leaders wanted to overthrow Mustapa and four of his committee members, citing their alleged inefficiency and incompetence.

"I have checked with Datuk Annuar Musa, who was one of those present at the dinner that night, and he confirmed there was no such talk. All that was discussed was the future of Kelantan Umno.

"Whatever suggestions on who should replace Mustapa was based on loose talk that Mustapa himself wanted to vacate the post.

"I suppose that when the events of the meeting were passed from one individual to another, the story got distorted along the way. I have asked Mustapa personally and he has maintained that he would con-

tinue to lead Kelantan Umno.

"I conveyed Mustapa's confirmation to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Wednesday and he was quite pleased with it," he added.

Earlier, Abdullah told the Jeli delegates that no one could tell Mustapa to leave so long as he wanted to continue as the Kelantan Umno chief.

Admitting that rumours about Mustapa were spread by Umno members themselves, the Deputy Prime Minister said such misdeeds were committed by those out to gain mileage at the expense of others.

"If we do not entertain such loose talk, then nothing will happen. But if we help spread it ourselves, then things will only get worse.

"We do not know who (the individuals) started the rumour but when the press gets wind of it, it will definitely be blown up.

"I've decided to end the issue. As such, I've proposed that all division and branch leaders adopt a resolution pledging their support to Datuk Mustapa during their meetings. When everyone proclaims that they support Mustapa, then the issue will be closed, and only then will Kelantan Umno be seen as united," he added.