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Dr M: Party members free to lodge reports

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said party members were free to lodge reports on any wrongdoing but such a move should not be politically-motivated.

On claims that he had given the blessings to Puteri Umno member Zalilah @ Elly Yusof to lodge a police report against pro-tem chief Azalina Othman Said for mismanagement of the movement's funds and property, the Prime Minister said:

"She informed me that offences have been committed. I told her if that's so, then it is a matter for the police.

"But if it is about who's contesting, then it is a party matter and not for the police," he told a Press conference after opening the 18th Commonwealth Auditors-General Conference at the Palace of the Golden Horses.

Zalilah has been hauled up before the party's disciplinary board to answer charges of breach of the party's code of conduct.

Dr Mahathir said: "Umno members are free to lodge reports if someone has committed an offence but it should not be political...if it is wrong, it is wrong."

On the many aspirants for the movement's top post and whether this could affect efforts to lay a strong foundation for the party's newest wing, Dr Mahathir said any new organisation would face some teething problems.

"But as the teeth grow, there will be no more problem," he quipped.

On whether Puteri Umno had succumbed to the culture of negative politics like back-stabbing and character assassinations in the run-up to election next month, Dr Mahathir said the matter arose also due to instigation from non-Puteri members.