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Mahathir-Kelantan

KELANTAN UMNO COUP ALLEGATION A SPECULATION, SAYS DR M

SHAH ALAM, March 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today brushed aside a report alleging of a coup brewing in Kelantan Umno, saying it is mere speculation.

"That's speculation," he said when asked to comment on a front-page report in the New Straits Times today that 12 of the 14 Kelantan Umno division heads want to replace the party's state office-bearers, claiming they were ineffective.

The report quoted a division head confirming that the 12 had reached a consensus that the five office-bearers should be replaced.

They are Kelantan Umno chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, secretary Datuk Ahmad Rusli Ibrahim, treasurer Datuk Dr Nik Hussain Abdul Rahman, information chief Mohd Noor Deris and executive secretary Mohd Nawawi Yaacob.

Speaking at a press conference after launching the Selangor Barisan Nasional (BN) Convention here today, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said he was not aware of a request to replace the five.

"I don't know. I've to ask the 12 people. They did not tell me," he said.

Dr Mahathir criticised the division heads for going to the press to voice out their grievances instead of informing Umno leaders.

"They don't give importance to leaders. Their priority is the press," he said.

Asked whether Kelantan Umno needed a leadership change, Dr Mahathir said no leader held his post permanently, noting that some are ineffective.

"I was also removed as the Kelantan Umno chief before, replaced by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and when he quit the post, Mustapa took over.

"Mustapa is not going to be the Kelantan Umno liaison chief for life, I also cannot stand it.

"Ten years I held the post, I was removed because I did not succeed (to wrest Kelantan from PAS)," he said.

Dr Mahathir was, however, quick to say that he was not hinting that Mustapa should be replaced.

"I'm not hinting like that, I'm only saying no leader is permanent," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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