

08 JUL 2002

Najib-Umno

NAJIB SAYS YES TO POSTPONEMENT OF UMNO ELECTIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 8 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak today expressed support for the proposal to postpone next year's party elections to a date after the next general election.

He said this would be the best move to prevent jostling for posts among Umno members and enable them to focus on preparing for the general election.

"Personally I fully support the move to postpone Umno elections," he said when asked to comment on yesterday's statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president, that the party elections would be deferred.

Najib, who is Defence Minister, was speaking at a news conference after receiving, on behalf of his ministry, the Eagle ARV intelligence and reconnaissance aircraft from Composites Technology Research Malaysia at the Subang air force base.

The current term of the Umno supreme council members expires in June next year while the next general election must be held by the end of 2004. The Umno constitution allows the term of supreme council members to be extended by up to 18 months.

Najib said the postponement of party elections could also prevent factionalism within Umno and the negative effects of contests for party posts.

Najib was also asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's statement yesterday that he (Najib) was the most qualified person to assume the deputy prime minister's post when Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi takes over as prime minister in 16 months' time.

The defence minister broke into a smile and said there was no need for him to comment on the matter now. "Not now, not now. Thank you," he said..

On the Syariah Criminal Offences (Hudud and Qisas) Enactment tabled at the Terengganu State Assembly yesterday, Najib said it was politically motivated.

"The tabling was carried out in a haste. Their motive is political as they had promised to table a hudud bill as soon as they come to power in Terengganu," he said.

However, after nearly three years, there had been no development on the implementation of hudud law in the state, said Najib.

The state government was thus faced with a credibility problem and that was why it was tabling the bill now, he said.

"They actually don't have the intention to implement (hudud law)," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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