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Najib-DPM

NAJIB SHOCKED OVER STATEMENT THAT HE COULD BE NEXT DPM

ALOR SETAR, July 4 (Bernama) -- Umno Vice President Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today that he was shocked over the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday of the possibility that he may become the next Deputy Prime Minister.

"I am shocked because the Prime Minister said it openly," he said when responding to reporters' questions after a meeting with the Anak Bukit Umno Committee at Bangunan Tunku here.

Asked whether he considered Dr Mahathir's statement as a form of recognition, Najib said:

"I do not know what to say. We accept the Prime Minister's statement as how we usually give weightage to the Prime Minister's statement. That is what I feel," he said.

Yesterday when speaking at a meeting with the Kubang Pasu Umno Division Committee at his office in Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir said, "Actually if I am no longer the Prime Minister, today Pak Lah (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) will be the Prime Minister and probably Najib will be the Deputy Prime Minister, but they are prepared to wait for another 16 months to assume their posts."

Asked whether he was ready to hold the post of Deputy Prime Minister, Najib said, "Wait for the time to come, we will leave it to the leadership to decide."

Najib said all Umno leaders and members should work more and reduce politicking as suggested by Dr Mahathir during the transition period.

"The situation has not changed. At present there is no change in the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister."

Najib, who is Chairman of the Umno Membership Committee, said the increase in the number of members from 500 to the present 6,224 in the Anak Bukit constituency augured well for Umno in facing the by-election.

Polling for the by-elections for Anak Bukit and the parliamentary constituency of Pendang will be held simultaneously on July 18 to fill the vacancies created by the death of PAS President Datuk Fazil Noor on June 23. He was the MP for Pendang the assemblyman for Anak Bukit.

-- BERNAMA

JM NMO AAM