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Mahathir-Retire

RESPECT DR M'S DECISION TO RETIRE, SAYS HIS POLITICAL SECRETARY

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- All Umno leaders and members should respect Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision not to contest the next general election, his political secretary Datuk Johari Baharom said today.

He said the Prime Minister had stated several times that his decision to retire was final.

At the Kubang Pasu Division committee meeting last week, Dr Mahathir, who is the division head, also reiterated his stand, said Johari, who is the vice-head of the division.

"As such, we should respect Dr Mahathir's decision," he said.

He was commenting on a resolution adopted by the Pasir Mas Umno Division in Kelantan rejecting Dr Mahathir's plans not to contest the next polls and urging him to defend his Kubang Pasu parliamentary seat.

Johari said apart from calls from within the country for Dr Mahathir to rethink his decision, some world leaders had also contacted the Prime Minister urging him to continue leading the country.

"But he has already made up his mind and it is final," he said.

Johari said although Dr Mahathir would not contest the next polls, he had promised to campaign for the Barisan Nasional (BN).

At the same time, Dr Mahathir is also giving support to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who has been named his successor.

Johari said Dr Mahathir's support for Abdullah showed his confidence in Abdullah's ability in leading the country.

Johari said the leadership styles of Dr Mahathir and Abdullah might differ, but they shared a common objective in developing the country.

He said it was normal for leaders to have different leadership styles, and this would not affect the country's development because there was continuity in the country's policies.

"Although Tun Razak's style was different from Tunku Abdul Rahman's, Tun Hussein's style was different from Tun Razak's and Dr Mahathir's style is different from Tun Hussein's, Umno's and the government's policies continue to be implemented," said Johari, who was previously political secretary to Abdullah.

He cited as an example the New Economic Policy (NEP), which was introduced during Tun Razak's time and was continued by Tun Hussein and then Dr Mahathir.

Abdullah, who is attending the Apec leaders' summit in Los Cabos, Mexico, yesterday reiterated his assurance that existing policies will be maintained after Dr Mahathir retires in October next year.

-- BERNAMA

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