

# Hilmi: Let BN leaders decide on CM post

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PENANG Umno will leave it to the Barisan Nasional leadership to decide who should be the state's chief minister, the party's state liaison deputy chairman Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said.

*Utusan Malaysia* quoted Hilmi as saying that for the time being, Penang Umno would abide by the agreement among Barisan component party members that the post would be filled by Gerakan.

Hilmi was responding to a call by Tanjong division chief Raja Munir Shah Raja Mustafa on Wednesday that the Penang Chief Minister should be from Umno so that the interest of the Malays there would be best served.

"If we want to overturn that agreement in order to implement the recommendation (by Raja Munir), then we would have to revert the matter to the Barisan Nasional leadership," Hilmi said on Thursday.

While debating the motion of thanks for the presidential address at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre, Hilmi also reminded delegates of the diminishing strength of Malay politics compared with that of non-Malays.

*Utusan Malaysia* quoted him as saying that the non-Malays' support for the Barisan Nasional was stronger than that of Malays was evident from the 1995 and 1999 general elections which saw Umno suffering losses in many Malay constituencies.

Hilmi said Umno suffered losses in Malay-dominated constituencies in Penang and lost Terengganu and Kelantan to the opposition, resulting in Umno having to rely on the other component parties to set up government.

"Previously, Umno could set up government without the other component parties, but

now, whether we like it or not, we have to rely on the other component parties because of our small numbers (in Parliament)," he said.

Hilmi said what was even more disappointing was that the opposition leader was a Malay, adding: "If we keep fighting among ourselves, we will lose again."

"But the question now is whether Umno can continue to keep the posts of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister."

Awang Selamat in his daily *Bisik-Bisik* column in *Utusan Malaysia* said Umno members were quick to cry together with party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during the general assemblies but they were also quick to forget his exhortations.

That's why, Awang said, Dr Mahathir had to cry again on Thursday during his presidential address.