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Mahathir-Term

LIMITED TENURE FOR PARTY LEADERS NOT SUITABLE FOR ALL

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said limiting the tenure of political party leaders is not suitable for all political parties in the country.

Although limiting the tenure for the top post to a certain number of years was suitable for MCA, it was not necessarily so for the other parties, he said.

"Umno at the moment has got no problem, I have been president of Umno for 22 years. If you have the limit, I won't be the president (of Umno) and could not be prime minister (for such a long period)," he said at a media conference after opening the MCA 50th annual general assembly (AGM) here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, was asked to comment on the MCA decision to limit the tenure of the party president to a maximum of nine years or for a period of three terms.

Dr Mahathir said by limiting the tenure for a party leader or national leader, it would prevent the leader from contributing to the party and nation within such a short period.

For example, if the leader's post was for a specific period such as five years, the first year was for him to learn the intricacies of administering the country or party, the second year was for settling down and the third year to prepare for the next election, fourth year for campaigning and then it was already the final year in office.

However, Dr Mahathir said the nine year limit for the MCA president to hold the post is "a good time and enough time to do what they want to do."

The proposal was unanimously adopted by the MCA AGM today after similar term limits for the MCA Youth and MCA Wanita leaders received the nod at their respective assemblies yesterday.

On the general election, the Prime Minister refuted speculation that it would be held before his retirement in October.

"I don't have the time. Until October, I have to travel all over the world before I step down. So many countries have invited me," said Dr Mahathir who left for a three-day visit to Algeria this afternoon. He would later visit Swaziland and Syria.

The Prime Minister said even the decision to hold discussions among the BN component parties on the 25 new parliamentary seats had been delegated to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

-- BERNAMA

HK AZZ AO