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Mahathir-Umno

UPHOLD UMNO TRADITION OF NO CONTEST FOR TOP TWO POSTS, SAYS DR M

PUTRAJAYA, July 12 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today threw his weight behind Umno's tradition by saying that the posts of Umno president and deputy president should not be challenged in party elections.

Dr Mahathir said he did not think that Gua Musang division chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who has offered himself as a candidate to lead Umno, would be getting any support from Umno divisions which are currently holding their delegates' meeting in the run-up to the Umno election in September.

"But without thinking about Tengku Razaleigh, I think that for the (posts of) president and the deputy president, there shouldn't be any challenge.

"And this applies to anybody. I am not talking about Tengku Razaleigh (alone)," he told reporters after attending a party thrown by the Perdana Leadership Foundation for him and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, in conjunction with their 79th birthday.

Dr Mahathir, who was Umno president from 1981 to 2003, said any contest should be limited to up to the vice-presidency level.

"All this is the tradition of Umno," he said when asked to comment on Tengku Razaleigh's decision to offer himself for the top party post announced last Friday in Gua Musang.

On the assertion by Tengku Razaleigh, better known as Ku Li, that he was doing it for the sake of democracy in Umno, Dr Mahathir said: "But I have always said that democracy is meant for the people, not people must sacrifice for democracy."

He agreed that it was the Kelantan prince's right to offer himself but "he is not going anywhere" with it.

Prime Minister and acting Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad

Badawi, who has received massive nominations from Umno divisions to become party president, has shrugged off Tengku Razaleigh's quest to head the party.

Asked whether Ku Li's challenge was just an attempt to "stir" things up, Dr Mahathir said: "Stir what up, he cannot get anything at all, not even one vote. Maybe from his own division only."

Ku Li lost when he challenged Dr Mahathir for the Umno presidency in 1987.

On whether he still followed developments in Umno, Dr Mahathir said the party was always on his mind.

"I think about Umno. That means anything that is good for Umno, I will support," he said.

Earlier, family and friends were in a cheery mood as they gathered for the birthday party for the nation's former First Couple.

Dr Mahathir jokingly said that this was the fourth time that someone had thrown a birthday party for him. Previous celebrations included the ones in Turkey and on a flight back to Malaysia.

Dr Siti Hasmah also demonstrated her musical skills by playing a Malay traditional tune on the organ to the delight of those present.

-- BERNAMA  
MAM RM