

Umno leaders rebut Dr Mahathir's appraisal
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By Nigel Aw

Umno leaders today rebutted former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's claim that BN and in particular Umno, was unprepared for the next general election.

"We are ready, all divisions are ready, when prime minister (Najib Abdul Razak) says go, we will go," said Cheras Umno division chief Syed Ali Alhabshee said when contacted by Malaysiakini today.

mahathir responses to suaram report 02Mahathir (right) had yesterday said that if BN faced an election now, its chances of winning were slim due to factional infighting within Umno.

"When the Umno president announces a candidate (for the general election), there always will be protests, supposedly that the candidate is wrong.

"And if someone else is chosen, the ones that were not picked will sabotage the chosen candidate," the former Umno president was quoted as saying.

However, Syed Ali said that this should not be construed as something that would cause BN's defeat.

"This culture is everywhere, not only in BN, but also in Pakatan Rakyat, it is the norm that the ones who are not chosen will feel hurt.

"It was normal during Mahathir's time, it was normal during Pak Lah's (former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) time."

Not so serious

Umno Youth secretary Megat Firdouz Megat Junid acknowledged the problem but said that it was not as serious as it was before.

"Internal politicking will not end but I am sure leaders in Umno and BN will know how to stop and stay focused when the general election is called."

He added Mahathir's claim that the new Umno generation was more interested in positions was untrue.

"In the context of Umno Youth, our generation still has the spirit to fight for our party, so it's not true. We don't get any anything nor do we ask for anything."

azlanHe was responding to Mahathir's statement that the previous Umno generation was willing to sacrifice their wealth to support the party without expecting rewards but the new generation wanted favours and party positions for contracts.

"God willing, I feel we are prepared," said Megat Firdouz when asked if BN was ready should the general election be called tomorrow.

Speculation is rife that the general election will be called soon as Najib has moved to institute a number of reforms, long demanded by the civil societies and Pakatan.

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