

DPM We'll explain issue

We have to address not Dr M but the people, says Najib

KUALALUMPUR: Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tan Razak when asked to comment on Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz's statement on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Najib was speaking to newsmen after opening the Worlds Security Forum at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Noticing that the newsmen were not satisfied with his short reply, Najib smiled and said: "And I am not going to add to that."

Earlier, the Umno deputy president, said he was unaware of talk among Umno leaders of a move to sack Dr Mahathir.

"I don't know. We have not talked about such matters and we have not made any decision and we have not taken any position," he said.

The only position Umno has taken is that we will explain to the people regarding some of the allegations that he had made.

"We have to address not Dr Mahathir but the wider population because the people must be convinced that we have taken the right decision," he said

Asked if this matter will erode investor confidence, Najib said he did not think so. "I think we can convince them that this is a stable Government and we have a strong mandate," he said.

"The party (Umno) is strong and we will explain the matter to the people.

"As long as we can attain annual growth domestic product rate of 6% for the next 15 years, we will reach the developed nation status.



FOCUSED: Najib speaking at the World Security Forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — Bernamagic

"So our target now is to go for growth and achieve the rate."

Meanwhile, Information Minister Datuk Zainuddin Maidin said Dr Mahathir would only hurt himself if he continued to criticise the Government.

"The more statements he makes, the deeper he gets involved with the country's administrative issues, and he will hurt himself more," he told reporters after opening the Non-Aligned Movement News Network yesterday.

"He will also tarnish his own respectable position, reputation and good name."

He said he was not speaking on behalf of Umno but expressing his views and the feelings of the grassroots.

"He (Dr Mahathir) was not angry. I was honest with him about my feelings and the feelings of the grassroots," he said.

"I spoke to him only because I sym-

pathise with him and I am worried that he will tarnish his reputation.

"He has made up his mind. (Dr) Mahathir is a strong-minded person and what he is doing has proven that there are no friends and no enemies in politics."

When asked if Dr Mahathir should leave Umno, Zainudin did not want to comment and only said: "People always change according to situations."