

Mat Taib: Dr M knows Umno will not act

BY SA'ODAH ELIAS

SHAH ALAM: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is emboldened to continue criticising Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi because he knows he enjoys a form of immunity that prevents Umno from taking action against him, said a party leader.

Umno information chief Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said the immunity did not just exist out of respect for the

former leader but of an awareness that taking action against the former premier would send the wrong signal to the people.

"If we act, we will make him a hero, a martyr. People will ask why when he has done so much good and contributed to the nation," he said in an interview.

"People do not understand the damage he is doing now. He did good before but now it is bad, like the accusation that Malaysia is a police state, when

he is the one who liked to have people arrested, before (when he was prime minister)."

He said the Umno supreme council had decided it would be better to let Dr Mahathir speak till he was contented.

"We chose not to act against him because we do not want to be seen as a bully. But this is not a weakness. It is actually strength.

"We want to show the people that we will continue to accord him respect as a former

leader who had contributed a great deal," he said.

Muhammad said there were people who thought that Umno would expel Dr Mahathir but the party instead acted wisely.

"It was Pak Lah (Abdullah) himself who suggested that we allow him (Dr Mahathir) to continue holding the posts (as adviser to a number of government-linked bodies)."

Muhammad said Dr Mahathir's allegations against the

present leadership had resulted in Umno having to spend a lot of time and energy to explain to the grassroots about the economy, politics and administration.

"Dr Mahathir used to be very sharp in his thinking but now, I don't know," he said.

"So how do you satisfy someone like that? He used to be a great leader before, but now he can't see logic."

• See the full story at www.mstar.com.my.