

'Sick and tired' of Dr M

Hisham: Umno Youth's support for Abdullah cannot be questioned

PETALING JAYA: Umno Youth is "sick and tired" of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's attitude of constantly criticising Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Its chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said Umno Youth's support for Abdullah's leadership, who is also the party president, cannot be questioned.

"As the Umno Youth chief, I will never ever allow our members' attention to be distracted because of the current polemics, nor will I allow this movement to be divided," he said in a statement yesterday.

"We will continue to defend the party's institution and ensure that its fight is still relevant.

"I myself will go down to the ground to carry out the responsibility mandated to me as the Education Minister."

Hishammuddin said a lot still needed to be done to realise all the plans under the 9th Malaysia Plan.

"We will prove that the Barisan Nasional government under Pak Lah is still relevant, responsible, committed, hard-working and has strong determination to bring harmony and development for the people," he added.

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir has continued his attacks against the Government and Abdullah's leadership despite meeting with his successor on Sunday to talk things over.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir took it up another notch when he issued a two-page open letter, entitled *Why did I criticise the Prime Minister?* that was directed to the "Citizens of Malaysia."

He said he was forced to write the open letter to ensure it was not spun by anyone.

At the open house in Kepala Batas on Thursday, Abdullah Said Dr Mahathir's latest attacks were akin to stronger doses of venom and expressed sadness over it.

In **Sitiawan**, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol Rosli Ghazali said Abdullah and Dr Mahathir should continue to meet each other privately to resolve their differences.

"They should have one-to-one dinner or high tea, and not make criticisms through the media," he told reporters at the Perak Umno Liaison Committee Zon D Hari Raya open house in Seri Manjung.

"Our prayers are for Tun and Abdullah to make Umno one big happy family again," added Tajol Rosli, who is also Perak Umno liaison chief.

Of all people, he said Dr Mahathir should be the one to better understand Abdullah's position.

"When Tun first became prime minister, he too was criticised for his administration and policies by Tunku Abdul Rahman. What was done to him, he is doing to Pak Lah now," Tajol Rosli said.

"In 1987, Tun met with Tunku and kissed his hand and everything was fine for 10 days after that. But it has taken Tun only one day after his meeting with Pak Lah to start the criticisms in the media again," he added.

In **Butterworth**, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said Dr Mahathir's description of the country, as a police state was inaccurate.

"We are a free country and our people are free to talk. We are a democratic state," he said.

In **Malacca**, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam pledged his support for Abdullah during the Hari Raya open house, which was graced by the Prime Minister.