

Nik Aziz urged not to contest
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By ALANG BENDAHARA

LANGKAWI: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised Pas spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat not to contest in the coming general election.

The former prime minister and ex-Umno president said Nik Aziz, who is also Kelantan menteri besar, should emulate him and retire from politics.

"I just want to advise him to forget any intention to contest. It is good that he retires as I have also retired. Nik Aziz has been (in politics) longer than me," Dr Mahathir said during his visit to the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre here yesterday.

He was commenting on a report quoting Nik Aziz as saying that he would contest in the next general election to fight Umno.

"Nik Aziz's hatred for Umno is overwhelmingly greater than his disagreement with (DAP chairman) Karpal Singh. To him, it is better (to support) Karpal than Umno...that is Nik Aziz," said Dr Mahathir.

In the recently-concluded Umno general assembly, several delegates had called on Nik Aziz to retire from politics.

In Miri, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said opposition party leaders apparently did not want younger leaders to take over their leadership.

Shafie said this was evident from the statement by Nik Aziz, 80, who had confirmed that he would contest in the next general election.

Bernama quoted Shafie as saying that Nik Aziz's decision was contrary to the Barisan Nasional's stand of fielding more young candidates in the next general election.

"We have agreed to field more young candidates so that they can become the second echelon leaders to the present leadership," he said after launching a rural water supply project in Kampung Kuala Sibuti here.

He said only the people could determine whether they wanted to continue supporting old leaders or choose younger ones.

Shafie, who is rural and regional development minister, said he was confident that Sabah and Sarawak would remain the strongholds of the BN in the next general election.

He said he saw no reason for the people of Sabah and Sarawak to support opposition parties which had recently questioned the government's decision to provide huge financial allocations to the two states.

The rural areas of Sabah and Sarawak still lacked basic amenities and huge allocations were

required to provide such development, he said, pointing out why the government gave priority to the two states.

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