

## **Mukhriz States Loyalty to UMNO**

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ALOR SETAR, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, facing an expression of no-confidence from Kedah UMNO leaders, said he remains loyal to UMNO and dismissed assumptions he would switch to another party.

He said what he wanted to do now was to strengthen the party to face the 14th general election, due in 2018, so that UMNO could win big.

Addressing a gathering of Jerlun UMNO division members here, he said efforts to strengthen the party required the support and cooperation of all quarters so that all development strategies were implemented successfully for the benefit of the people.

Mukhriz, who is the state assemblyman for Ayer Hitam, said he was prepared to step down if there was a leader better than him who had the full support of the people.

"If I have done wrong and am regarded as not good, and there is someone better than I and whom the people of Kedah trust, I will support that person.

"If there is none, then why change? This is not a question of 14 people not having confidence in me. It is more important for the two million people of Kedah to have confidence in me.

"It is not that I want to challenge, but I only want the best for the party and the people of Kedah," he said.

Yesterday, several Kedah UMNO leaders, among them state assemblymen and MPs, declared no-confidence in the leadership of Mukhriz as the menteri besar and state UMNO liaison committee chairman.

Mukhriz said the expression of no-confidence might have resulted from his having been transparent in certain matters that made some quarters uncomfortable.

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