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Contest is democratic, says Dr M

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Don't play dirty, Umno men told

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad described as democratic the moves by Umno leaders to offer themselves for the deputy president's post.

However, he cautioned that the competition must be healthy and there should be no dirty tactics.

"It is good ... contest, lah ... we are democratic. Just don't play dirty. Don't pay money and don't bribe. We show our strength, insya-Allah (God willing), people will choose us. "If we use pressure, arm-twisting

tactics and pull back contracts, this is not democracy," he said at a Hari Raya open house at his residence at The Mines Resort City here yesterday.

Asked if Umno needed to have a continuation of leadership like what was happening in the MCA and Gerakan, Dr Mahathir said leaders must emulate MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, who stepped aside at the coming party election after his party suffered major setbacks in the March 8 general election.



The more, the merrier: Dr Mahathir and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali receiving guests to their Raya open house in Seri Kembangan near Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — Bernama

"Unlike some leaders, even after they have suffered major losses, they still say they have won and refused to leave."

On his decision to rejoin Umno, Dr Mahathir said it came with a condition.

"Apparently, many left Umno when I quit, so if I rejoin the party and these people do not get to

rejoin, it is unfair.

"We must not forget that they have the power to vote. If they are outside Umno and vote for the Opposition, Umno will lose," he added.

In another development, Umno Youth exco member Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said those who wanted to contest for the Umno deputy presi-

dency should have waited until after the announcement by the Prime Minister by Thursday before voicing their intention.

So far, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ali Rustam have announced their bids for the number two post.