

Former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) is not supporting any particular candidate in the next presidential election in 2012, Chen's office said yesterday.

The office said in a statement that some media organizations had apparently misinterpreted comments by the director of the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Taipei branch, Huang Ching-lin (黃景麟), who told reporters about a conversation with Chen at the Taipei Detention Center on Wednesday.

MUNICIPAL POLLS

The statement said that during Huang's visit, he told Chen various polls indicated that former premier Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) and DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) were among the DPP's strongest candidates for next year's five special municipality elections.

Huang told Chen that Su seemed interested in running for president, so it would be hard to convince him to stand in next year's Taipei mayoral election, the statement said.

In response, Chen told Huang that most presidential candidates had served as Taipei mayor, including himself and President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九).

However, whether Su won the Taipei mayoral election or not should not stop him from running for president, the statement quoted Chen as saying.

ASPIRANTS

The statement said Chen realized that there were many aspirants within the DPP interested in running for president, but he would not and never intended to endorse anyone in particular.

"The former president merely expressed his personal opinion on the matter and never indicated a preference for any particular person," it said, adding that it was pure speculation by certain media outlets that Chen encouraged Su or supported him to run for president.

The office made the remarks in response to a report in yesterday's Chinese-language China Times newspaper. The report said Chen favored Su to stand in next year's Taipei mayoral election and that a Su victory would boost his momentum to run for the presidency.

The report said Chen accused Tsai of not being ambitious enough during the just-concluded "three-in-one" local elections earlier this month, and that former premier Yu Shyi-kun (俞正声) would make a better DPP leader.

The former president's office said in response that Huang had merely asked Chen whether Yu was suitable to serve as party chairman, to which Chen replied that Yu was "a candidate worth considering."

Ex-president has no favorites in election

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PERSONAL SPIN

With five municipal elections approaching, the statement said, many party members would visit Chen to ask his opinion, but they were likely to give a personal spin to Chen's remarks.

The statement urged media outlets to check with Chen's office before running such stories to prevent unnecessary mistakes.

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