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KUALA LUMPUR, FEB 7 (BERNAMA) -- THE UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL TODAY RATIFIED THE FORMATION OF SABAH UMNO AND OPENED ITS MEMBERSHIP TO USNO MEMBERS AND OTHER BUMIPUTERAS IN THE STATE WHATEVER THEIR RELIGION.

PRIME MINISTER AND UMNO PRESIDENT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID NON-MUSLIM MEMBERS, HOWEVER MUST ACCEPT ALL UMNO POLICIES AND ITS CONSTITUTION BEFOREHAND.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER CHAIRING THE COUNCIL MEETING AT UMNO HEADQUARTERS HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID USNO WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST IN SABAH BECAUSE OF +CERTAIN REASONS.+ HE DID NOT SAY WHAT THE REASONS WERE.

BEFORE THIS, SEVERAL SABAH QUARTERS SUCH AS USNO, PARTI MOMOGUN, BERSEPADU AND A GROUP UNDER FORMER BERJAYA VICE-PRESIDENT DATUK MOHAMED DUN BANIR HAD EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO JOIN UMNO IN SABAH.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID A PRO TEM COMMITTEE HAD BEEN SET UP IN SABAH COMPRISING SEVERAL USNO MEMBERS, DATUK MOHAMED DUN AND BERSEPADU PRESIDENT DATUK PADUKA OSMAN RAOF. -- MORE
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IT WOULD HANDLE ADMITTANCE INTO SABAH UMNO WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF UMNO VICE-PRESIDENT GHAFAR BABA AND SEVERAL OTHER UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS.

ON ADMITTANCE OF USNO MEMBERS INTO UMNO, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS WOULD BE BASED OF THE LIST OF NAMES OF THOSE INTERESTED AND NOT EFFECTED ON AN EN BLOC BASIS.

USNO WOULD SUBMIT THE LIST OF NAMES OF ITS MEMBERS TOGETHER WITH THEIR SIGNATURES FOR VERIFICATION BEFORE THEY WERE ACCEPTED INTO UMNO.

MEETINGS WOULD BE HELD FOR THE SETTING UP OF UMNO BRANCHES IN SABAH AND THOSE WHOSE NAMES WERE NOT IN THE LIST BUT HAD REGISTERED TO JOIN UMNO COULD ATTEND.

MEANWHILE, UMNO SECRETARY-GENERAL DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID SAID UMNO HEADQUARTERS WOULD INVITE SABAH UMNO MEMBERS TO SEND OBSERVERS TO THE APRIL UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF UMNO'S LATEST OVERSEAS CLUB, THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA UMNO CLUB. -- BERNAMA
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