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LEAD Umno-election

NO CONTEST FOR THOSE WHO FAIL TO REGISTER EVEN NOMINATED

KUALA LUMPUR, 6 April (Bernama) -- Umno members who are interested in contesting for posts in the October election must register themselves with the Umno headquarters.

Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said they were given a month from Monday to do so and the registration must be done personally.

Those who failed to register would not be allowed to contest even if they had been nominated by the divisions, he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn, Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said they were also allowed to register for more than one post.

Today's meeting had fixed campaigning period for three months beginning July 1.

"Until then, no campaign will be allowed. This means that no visits to other divisions except one's own division," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno liaison committees in the states were also not allowed to hold functions which could be interpreted as campaigning beginning Monday.

"When the campaigning starts, we'll see that every candidate has the opportunity to meet the divisions and liaison committees," he said.

This is the first time that Umno requires potential candidates to register themselves as well as fixing the campaigning period. Asked on why the move, Dr Mahathir said:

"There are complaints of individuals purportedly campaigning here and there and of others using their position in the government for self interest, so we've decided on this.

"We'll monitor. If there are attempts to make use of such office, maybe we'll not allow such individuals to contest," he said.

He said Umno ministers on official duties to the states were not allowed to hold meeting with the divisions except their own division.

Asked whether the new ruling on the campaigning period was in anticipation of stiff competition for the Vice-President's posts and that of the Supreme Council members, Dr Mahathir said there were many other things which Umno had to take care of such as the 50th anniversary celebrations.

"Furthermore, there's no need for us to campaign for months...as though we've nothing else to do, just campaigning.

"We'll ask Umno members not to vote those who resort to methods disallowed by the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the disciplinary committee would take actions against those who failed to follow the procedures set.

The disciplinary committee would also keep an eye on poison-pen letters, discrediting other candidates. "I was told there were such letters but I've never read them," he said.

Umno Secretary General Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, meanwhile, said the list of nomination for the posts would send to all divisions and state liaison committees at the end of the one-month registration period.

Today's meeting which lasted almost three and half hours also discussed the preparations for the anniversary celebrations.

During the news conference, Dr Mahathir showed the pressmen a crystal bowl presented to Umno in conjunction with its 50th anniversary from Fine Gael, a party in Ireland which holds the majority in the government.

The gift was presented by a senior party official Michael Noonan, who is also Irish Health Minister, during his visit to Malaysia recently.

Today's meeting also agreed to lift the suspension imposed on the Batu Gajah and Tanjung Umno divisions. The two divisions were suspended following problems during divisional election. --Bernama

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