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S46-Dissolve

PARTI MELAYU SEMANGAT '46 TO BE DISSOLVED ON OCT 6

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Parti Melayu Semangat '46 (S46) will be dissolved on Oct 6, at a special general assembly to be held here, to enable its members to join Umno, its president, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, said today.

The decision was unanimously made at a special meeting of the S46 supreme council at Tengku Razaleigh's residence here this afternoon.

"We hope that the people of Kelantan will welcome our proposal as an effort in uniting the race," he told reporters after the two-hour meeting.

Razaleigh, who met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad two days ago, said S46 had reached an understanding with Umno on the unification and the S46 members would join Umno en masse.

"I have reported to the prime minister that the response from the members was satisfactory although some of them had their own reservations but the support for this effort can be said to be overwhelming," he said.

"So I feel that, God willing, nothing untoward will happen when we hold the special general assembly. Our proposal is Oct 6 this year," he said.

Present at the news conference were the party's deputy president, Datuk Rais Yatim and secretary-general Datuk Manan Osman.

Razaleigh also said that a public lecture on the unification of the race would be held in Kelantan in early October to inform the people of Kelantan of the unification effort.

He said Dr Mahathir had agreed to attend the lecture to be organised by S46 and the Kelantan Umno.

"We hope that the people of Kelantan will welcome our unification proposal and join us in inviting all the people to unite," he said.

Asked whether he was confident that Umno would regain power in Kelantan, Razaleigh said: "We have discussed the possibility of our working together to regain power in Kelantan because if we look now, PAS itself is in disarray and uncertainty."

Razaleigh said this had resulted in PAS trying to "steal S46 members" because it was not so confident of its position in Kelantan.

Last month, the Kelaboran state assemblyman from S46, Haji Nordin Yaakob, joined PAS, increasing its seats to 25 in the 43-seat Kelantan state assembly.

"According to our study, we feel, that God willing, PAS will fall when we move together," Razaleigh said.

He said that under the new registration by S46, it had managed to gather about 100,000 members from among the voters.

"If this is added to the votes that the Barisan Nasional got in 1995 and even if we discount 20 per cent, God willing, we can wrest many seats from PAS," he said.

"This is a question of unification, cooperation, campaign coordination and what we have to present to the people so that they can be with us. If all these can be decided, I feel our hope of regaining power in Kelantan is bright," he said.

He said the impending dissolution was a noble effort to unite the Malays and should be supported by all Malaysians, including PAS members.

Asked whether Oct 6 was chosen so that the party could be dissolved just before the Umno general assembly begins on Oct 9, he said the choice of date had nothing to do with the Umno gathering.

Tengku Razaleigh said S46 had wanted to hold the special general

assembly at the end of next month but could not get a hall.

He said S46 members would be joining Umno not with the hope of getting any party or government posts.

Tengku Razaleigh said in the first stage 200,000 members of S46 would forward their applications to join Umno en bloc, and he had informed Dr Mahathir of this.

The only thing on the agenda of the special general assembly at the Kuala Lumpur Hilton Hotel will be the dissolution of the party, he said.

Some 500 delegates are expected to attend the assembly and the party requires the support of about 300 or two-thirds majority to dissolve the party.

S46 information chief Shabbery Chik said the party expects to get the required support to be dissolved.

Tengku Razaleigh said there were no plans as yet to hold public lectures to explain the unification effort in other states apart from the one lined up for Kelantan.

S46 was formed by Tengku Razaleigh in 1989 after he had failed to unseat Dr Mahathir as Umno president in the party election in 1987.

Several Umno leaders then like Rais, Abdul Manan and Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin followed Tengku Razaleigh to the splinter party.

S46 cooperated with PAS in the 1990 general election to wrest control of the Kelantan state government from the BN.

In the last general election in 1995, S46 won 11 state and six parliamentary seats in Kelantan.

The rift between S46 and PAS heightened after Tengku Razaleigh confirmed in May this year that he had met Dr Mahathir to discuss his return to Umno. Tengku then claimed that S46 had 400,000 members.

On July 14, PAS severed all ties with S46. -- BERNAMA

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