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Mahathir-Umno

THERE SHOULD BE NO FACTIONS IN UMNO- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight Umno rejected the applications of former Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) members who wanted to set up their own Umno branches because the party does not want factions within it.

"All their applications for membership can be accepted if they agreed not to set up new branches for themselves," he said on his return tonight from Jakarta where he attended the Asean informal summit.

The Prime Minister said that if they were allowed to set up new branches then there would be factions -- former S46 Umno members and Umno members who were not former S46 members.

He said if this were to happen, there would certainly be an unhealthy situation in Umno.

Dr Mahathir said to Umno there was no such thing as ex-S46 members within it.

All applications were the same and there were no special conditions for former S46 members to join Umno.

He said every application for membership in Umno from former ex-S46 members should follow the procedures just for any other normal application to join the party.

"We (Umno) can accept all ex-S46 members as Umno members as long as they abide by the party rules just like others," he said.

In his first press conference yesterday as the new Umno Secretary-General Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said the party's Supreme Council had rejected the applications of more than 120,000 former S46 members to set up new Umno branches.

The S46 which was led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was dissolved on Oct 6 and all its members applied en bloc to join Umno.

Sabbaruddin said so far about 10,000 applications from them had been accepted.

Applications were also rejected from those who were underage or those who were already members.

Dr Mahathir also said it was not impossible that a large number of the applicants were already Umno members according to the party's computer records.

This meant they were applying to join Umno for the second time when in fact they were already members and so the applications were rejected.

On the possibility that among the applicants there were people who had been sacked from Umno or had been subjected to disciplinary action, Dr Mahathir said their applications would also be considered.

When asked why Senator Ibrahim Ali and Melor Assemblyman Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir were appointed to the supreme council two days later than the others, he smiled and said actually their names were already in the list "but I was in a hurry to attend the Apec forum in Manila and it was an oversight."

On the Jakarta informal summit, he said it went off well.

"We discussed rationally and also made rational decisions."

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Ayob received him at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport. -- BERNAMA

SJA AAM