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Mahathir-Council

THREE DISCHARGED BANKRUPTS RESTORED AS UMNO DELEGATES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Three of the 15 Umno members who were disqualified as delegates to the party's general assembly for being bankrupts can now attend the assembly, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

The prime minister said the Umno supreme council, at its meeting tonight, restored their status as delegates after being satisfied that they had been discharged as bankrupts.

The three were Che Rohim Che Jusoh of the Batu division (Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory), Omar Hussein of the Bukit Bendera division (Pulau Pinang) and Ansari Abdullah Ali of the Tuaran division (Sabah), he said after chairing the supreme council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

He said the Technical Committee chaired by Datuk Zaki Tun Azmi had received the discharge letters from the three delegates and confirmed their status with the Official Assignee.

With the restoration of their delegates status, the assembly starting tomorrow will be attended by 1,872 delegates with 44 representing the supreme council, 1,768 representing the divisions and 30 each representing the youth and women's wings.

Dr Mahathir said the meeting also left it to the in-coming supreme council to determine whether to retain the Special Election Committee chaired by him.

He said that if the committee was retained, it would continue to scrutinise cases involving money politics, abuse of position and breach of the no-campaign rule during and before the assembly.

He reiterated his warning that stern action would be taken against candidates or delegates proven to have breached the rules, even after they had won the election.

He said the supreme council also welcomed the new Umno Youth leader, Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, and new Wanita Umno leader Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman as council members.

"The supreme council congratulated them and they were sworn in as council members tonight," he said.

Ahmad Zahid, the former Umno Youth information chief, polled 199 votes to beat four other candidates, including incumbent Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik, to the post.

Dr Siti Zaharah, who is Deputy Health Minister garnered 271 votes to defeat incumbent Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz by a 27-vote majority in a straight fight.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council also received the applications of 200,000 former Parti Melayu Semangat 46 members to join Umno.

He said the application forms, handed over by former S46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah yesterday, would be processed by the party headquarters.

The supreme council also approved three motions -- the motion of thanks on the president's speech, motion on education and on religion -- for tabling tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir reminded the delegates that they were not allowed to use handphones during the assembly at the Dewan Merdeka, Putra World Trade Centre.

The ban also applied to the vote-counting area. -- BERNAMA

AH/ARA JK