

11 JAN 1997

Mahathir-Muhammad

DON'T MAKE TROUBLE FOR GOVERNMENT AND PARTY, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council today reminded government and party members not to do anything that could cause problems for the government and party, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said this in reference to the case of Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib, who was charged in a Brisbane court in Australia on Dec 23 with failing to declare an equivalent of RM2.4 million in cash before leaving that country.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said the supreme council had listened to Muhammad's explanation and discussed the case.

"We advise all government and party members not to do anything wittingly or unwittingly that can raise problems for the party although we have accepted Tan Sri Muhammad Taib's explanation," he told a news conference after chairing the supreme council meeting, which lasted over two hours, at Menara Datuk Onn, Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Muhammad was detained at the Brisbane international airport on Dec 22 last year. His case will be head by the Brisbane court in March.

On the Barisan Nasional's (BN) defeat in the Pulai Chondong state by-election in Kelantan, Dr Mahathir said the supreme council felt that a study had to be made by the party's information bureau headed by Datuk Dr Mohamed Yusof Noor.

In the Jan 6 by-election, PAS candidate Zulkefli Mamat polled 4,778 votes to beat the BN's Yusoff Hamzah by a majority of 118 votes.

The prime minister, when commenting on the defeat on Jan 7, said the PAS victory showed that the people of Kelantan wanted PAS and were not concerned about development or good administration.

The supreme council also discussed the en bloc entry into Umno of former members of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) which was dissolved on Oct 6 last year.

Dr Mahathir said they could not apply to open new branches in areas with existing branches but could apply to the party headquarters to ascertain the branch they wanted to join.

"It has been fixed that in areas with Umno branches, (former) S46 members should join those branches and not set up new ones.

"They can refer to the branch itself or, if they want, they can refer to the headquarters to find out the branch they can join," he said.

On the Umno management committee's proposal to introduce membership identification cards for the members, he said the supreme council was agreeable and had directed the committee chaired by deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to handle the matter.

The membership identification card is aimed at preventing duplication of registration, especially in Sabah, because some members used only one identification card to register themselves.

The supreme council also agreed to drop the word "Baru" (new) after "Umno " and had asked the Registrar of Societies to so. The word "Baru" was used when Umno was re-registered after its was declared unlawful by the court in 1988.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno general assembly would be held on Sept 3-7.

On Sept 3, the supreme council would hold a pre-assembly meeting followed by the Youth and Wanita general assemblies on Sept 4. The assembly proper would be held on Sept 5-7, he said.

Earlier, an elected and two appointed council members were sworn in.

They are National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail (elected) and Melor state assemblyman Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir and senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali.

They were absent on Nov 28 last year when the supreme council met for the first time after the October general assembly and party elections. --

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