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Avoid contests that can split party, says Ramli

IPOH, Tues. - Perak Umno liaison committee chairman Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib today called on those vying for key positions in the divisional elections to compromise to prevent any contest that could split the party.

He said everyone should instead channel their energy and efforts to help overcome the current economic problem.

"Although Umno practises democracy, members must place the nation and party interest above anything else," he added.

Ramli said he fully supported Umno president and Kelantan Umno liaison chief Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who stated that there would not be any contest for top posts in 14 divisions in the State.

"The decision by Kelantan Umno that there should not be a contest for top posts except in Gua Musang is appropriate. We will try not to have a contest in Perak," said Ramli, who is also Perak Menteri Besar.

In Kuala Lumpur, Kota Baru division Umno Youth chief Zahari Wahab suggested today that there should also be no contest for the posts of deputy heads and vice-heads of the divisions in Kelantan.

He said the supreme council should issue the directive immediately so that the matter would be laid to rest and this decision could be endorsed at the general assembly.

"The decision was a much needed dosage for Kelantan Umno before things get out of hand, judging by the intense campaigning taking place despite being prohibited by the party," Zahari said.

In Kangar, State Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said today he had received three complaints of party leaders in the Padang Besar division allegedly contravening the no-campaign rule.

"I will bring this matter to the attention of the technical committee at the party headquarters so that it can make its own evaluation. Meanwhile, I have warned Padang Besar party leaders and aspirants to toe the line," he said.

The division has come under the focus of Umno members since there has been talk that the top three posts comprising chairman, deputy chairman and vice chairman will be contested.

The respective incumbents are Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid, State Assembly Speaker Datuk Bahari Taib and State Agriculture Committee chairman Ishak Arshad.

In Malacca, State Umno liaison head Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin, who is also Chief Minister, warned former State party leaders yesterday not to create problems at the coming branch and divisional elections.

He said he would not hesitate to refer such matters to the Umno management and disciplinary committee for appropriate action.

In Kuala Terengganu, Umno members have been told to remain disciplined and to adhere to party rules to avoid complications in the branch and divisional meetings.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad said Umno, which is the main component party of the Barisan Nasional, wanted its members to lead by example by showing that they could remain united despite the pressures of party elections.

"By being united and supportive of one another, we will not only be able to overcome problems within the party but also problems in the economy," he told Umno divisional committee members at a breaking of fast at Seri Iman yesterday.

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