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No contests for top Kelantan Umno posts

KOTA BARU, Mon. - The Kelantan Umno liaison committee today unanimously agreed that, except for Gua Musang, there would be no contest for the posts of divisional chief in the State. This was in order to maintain party unity.

Umno president and Kelantan Umno liaison committee chief, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the decision only applied to Kelantan, but he wanted to see a compromise for the other Umno divisions.

The Prime Minister, who was here on a one-day visit, said this in reply to questions at a Press conference after chairing the State Umno liaison committee meeting at Sri Kelantan.

Also present were Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and State Umno leaders.

Contests for divisional chief posts in Kelantan would be permitted only if the incumbents quit.

"We discussed many things at today's committee meeting and we have unanimously agreed to safeguard the party unity by not having any contest for divisional chiefs."

"All divisional chiefs will be retained as there is no contest. The Gua Musang divisional chief said he will not seek re-election and wants to hand over the post to Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh," he said.

The Prime Minister also felt there was a need for fewer contests for the other posts in the divisions.

Dr Mahathir said they agreed instead to focus on strengthening the party in the State.

"We need to strengthen Umno in Kelantan more than any other place. That is why we made the decision," he said, adding Umno lost the State because of internal problems and not because of a strong Opposition.

Dr Mahathir said: "For the sake of the party, all Umno members in Kelantan will place party struggle above self."

On action against those who ignored the committee, Dr Mahathir replied: "I will talk to those concerned."

On the directive that supreme council members cannot vie for divisional chief posts, Dr Mahathir said it was a party decision.

"Likewise, supreme council members who are divisional chiefs cannot be challenged," he added.

Meanwhile, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali today urged participants of the One Village One Product programme to think long term.

She said their products should be readily available and be of good quality.

"They should also ensure that there is a well-planned marketing programme."

Dr Siti Hasmah, the wife of the Prime Minister, said this at the launch of the One Village One Product programme in Kampung Kubang Laka, Peringat, today.

Also present were the wife of the Rural Development Minister, Datin Rosniah Abdul Rahman and wife of the Entrepreneur Development Minister, Datin Khamarzaman Ahmed Meah.

Earlier, Dr Siti Hasmah met traders at Siti Khadijah central market. She accompanied Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on a one-day visit to Kelantan.

During the half hour visit, Dr Siti Hasmah talked to traders, bought

some biscuits and Kelantan traditional foods.
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