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Mahathir-Contest

NO RESTRICTION ON CONTESTS EXCEPT IN TWO KELANTAN DIVISIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 13 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council tonight decided that all posts at divisional level throughout the country can be contested except the posts of divisional head and deputy divisional head in Gua Musang and Peringat divisions in Kelantan.

Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Supreme Council had decided that the post of Gua Musang Umno Division head be given to Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah while that of the deputy post to its former head Saupi Deraman.

In the case of the Peringat Division, Dr Mahathir said Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa is retained as the divisional head while Melor Assemblyman Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir is the Deputy Divisional head.

However, Dr Mahathir said he would feel disappointed if his advice that there should be no contests for the posts of divisional head and that Umno Supreme Council members holding posts of divisional heads should not be challenged and that they should also not challenge incumbent divisional heads went unheeded.

"I will feel disappointed that my advice as party president to avoid contests for the posts of divisional heads is ignored. If the party president's advice is ignored, I feel it will be difficult for the party to function well," he said after chairing a meeting of the council at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno Supreme Council meeting last month decided that council members who were not heading any divisions should not challenge incumbents and that council members who were currently divisional heads should also not be challenged by others.

The Kelantan Umno Liaison Committee meeting which he chaired last month decided that all posts of divisional heads in the state be not contested except in the case of Gua Musang where Saupi had agreed to hand over his post to Tengku Razaleigh.

"Again this represented advice but even though it was advice from the president it should in fact be interpreted as advice from the British Adviser during the colonial rule when such advice had to be adhered to."

"Nevertheless if it is not heeded, there is nothing we can do. I can only advise. If not heeded, I will be disappointed." He said this when asked for his feelings if there was contest for all 165 divisions which would hold their divisional conferences from March 12 to 29.

Asked to comment on the mixed reaction from members to his advice, he said everyone had its views and they were bound to differ.

"Indeed there are opinions. I also have my views as to why there should not be contests but then if we take into account the opinions surely they will differ."

"People wishing to contest will of course be of the opinion that there should be a contest. Those not wishing to contest will be of the opinion that there should not be one," he said.

Dr Mahathir said his advice that there should not be contests was to safeguard party unity but if there were to be contests because Umno practised democracy, it should not lead to disunity.

On the decision by several State Umno Liaison Committees to prohibit contests at divisional levels, he said they had the right to make such decisions but did not have the right to enforce them.

"If they all agree then there can be no contests but those unwilling to have the pact, never mind," he said. -- BERNAMA  
AH AAM