

27/08/1998

State Umno units expected to name PM for president's post

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - All State Umno units are expected to nominate Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as party president for the party elections next year, Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said today.

"States like Penang, Selangor and Pahang have already publicly pledged their nomination for Dr Mahathir for the post.

"So far, there are no other candidates ... if there are no contestants, certainly Dr Mahathir will win unopposed," he told reporters after launching Projek Lebuhraya Utara-Selatan Berhad's "Malaysia OK!" campaign at the Sungai Buloh overhead bridge restaurant near here.

Sabbaruddin also spoke of possible amendments to the party constitution including abolishing the 10-bonus vote system which gives the president and his deputy 10 votes for every nomination from any division.

Another is the proposal that the minimum age of Umno members be reduced from the present 18 to 16.

He said both proposals would be brought to the Umno Supreme Council although he declined to confirm whether it would be discussed at the next meeting next week.

On the minimum age proposal, Sabbaruddin who is also the chairman of the party Constitution Amendment Committee, said the latter had already approved it and was currently waiting for the Supreme Council's approval.

Sabbaruddin also dismissed DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang's claims last week that the next general election would be held in October and that the DAP would deny Barisan Nasional a two-thirds majority in the Parliament.

He said only the Prime Minister knew when the next election would be held and that Lim did not know anything about it.

On the "Malaysia OK!" campaign, Sabbaruddin said it would help promote local goods among both Malaysians and foreigners, especially those from Thailand and Singapore, who regularly used the PLUS highway.

The campaign which will be held until the end of the year will see the highway's two overhead bridge restaurants, 18 rest and service areas and some of the 46 outlays stocked up with Malaysian-made goods and the accompanying promotions.

There will also be promotions for local fruits, domestic tourism packages, delicacies and cultural pastimes at the venues.

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