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Stop using leaders' names to garner votes, warns Anwar

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UMNO deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday warned members contesting in the upcoming divisional elections against using the names of the party president and deputy president for their own gains.

He said potential candidates are strictly prohibited from manipulating the names of party leaders to garner support from voters.

"We treat this matter as something which is very wrong. Thus, in line with the Umno Supreme Council's earlier decision, it was agreed that the party president and deputy president will not officiate any divisional meetings to avoid misinterpretation," he told a news conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after chairing the Umno Disciplinary Committee meeting.

He said although the use of party leaders' names is not widespread, "there have, indeed, been reports of such incidences among candidates who either failed to garner support or don't have the ability to do so".

He also said stern action will be taken against party leaders at all levels who breach the provisions set out in the party constitution and who disobey the directive of the Supreme Council and party headquarters.

The party's disciplinary committee have also decided that the branch meetings of the Permatang Pasir Tengah and Permatang Pasir be held again under the supervision of a Supreme Council member, a representative of the Malacca Umno liaison committee and a representative of Umno Kota Melaka division.

Anwar also said Supreme Council members will have to ensure the smooth running of their own branch meetings.

He also stressed that fee-paying members have the right to attend all branch meetings.

"If we find that there are branches or divisions which deny these fee-paying members their rights to attend the meeting, the meetings will be deemed null and void and the leaders will have to face action," he added.

He also commented on the decision by the Supreme Council at its last Friday meeting on contesting party posts.

"We need to ensure that the full spirit of the discourse in the meeting in the last Supreme Council.

"We do not want an unhealthy contest. We want to avoid as far as possible a contest. At the same time, we do not want the division or the state liaison to express their support or concern outside the purview and parameters of the party constitution and procedures.

"I think this is very important because the essence of Dr Mahathir's advice is to start talking to candidates or potential candidates and appeal to them and advise them that they have to work together as a team.

"You can't be supporting one candidate and using that to deny others of all the other positions in the party.

"Leaders must be advised that they cannot launch these massive campaign to try to either force the issue or deny the issue," he added.

(END)