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Mahathir-Umno

SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS MUST NOT BE CHALLENGED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 2 (Bernama) -- All Umno Supreme Council members who are heads of divisions must not be challenged by other party members while Supreme Council members who are not heads of divisions should not challenge the incumbents in the divisional elections to begin next week.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that the Supreme Council also decided that all heads of divisions in Kelantan must not be challenged.

"As this is the decision of the Supreme Council and allowed by the party constitution, the decision therefore does not contravene the constitution. So, there should not be any question of whether to observe the constitution or the Supreme Council's decision.

"The question is, if he violates, what should be done. This is another matter not decided by the Supreme Council but we have our own way to determine that the decision could be observed by all parties," he said after chairing the Supreme Council meeting at the Umno headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir said that the decision was to reduce the tension in the run-up to the divisional elections fixed for March 12 to 29 so that focus would be on efforts to overcome the economic crisis in the country.

At the previous Supreme Council meeting, Dr Mahathir said that the Supreme Council's decision on such matters was more an advice but he would regret it if the advice was not heeded.

However tonight, he said that the Umno constitution provided the right to the Supreme Council to make such a decision and it was the responsibility of other party members to observe and respect the decisions made by the Supreme Council.

In this respect, Dr Mahathir referred to Article 8.16 of the Umno constitution on the responsibilities of the Supreme Council and Clause 1.1.4 of the ethics of Umno members.

Article 8.16 states that the Supreme Council could take any action to ensure the proper running of the party.

Clause 1.1.4 states that Umno members must love the party and observe and respect the party decisions.

Asked whether the action of the Supreme Council to now consider the decision as a directive was taken because many heads of divisions from among Supreme Council members might be challenged in the divisional meetings, Dr Mahathir said: "We issue this kind of directive...we don't know whether there is a case or not."

On other posts, Dr Mahathir said that the Supreme Council did not make any decisions as to whether they could be contested or not.

As such, he said, Supreme Council members holding other posts could be challenged and they could also challenge the incumbents.

"Supreme Council members holding other posts could be challenged and they could contest for other posts and not the post of division heads.

"What was determined was only the post of division head. If they are held by Supreme Council members, there should not be anyone challenging them. If they (Supreme Council members) are not holding the post of division heads, they (Supreme Council members) should not contest (for the post)," he said. -- BERNAMA

AH/SJA/ARA RM