

13 DEC 1998

Umno-amendment

UMNO AMENDS CONSTITUTION AT SPECIAL ASSEMBLY

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Umno today held a day-long special general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here to amend its constitution in efforts to check money politics, tighten discipline and enhance loyalty to the party.

The 1,900 delegates from 165 divisions and the party's Supreme Council as well as the youth and women's wings deliberated on 15 proposed constitutional amendments.

Umno last amended its constitution in the early 1990s to curb money politics before the 1993 general assembly.

Delegates to today's special general assembly were those picked by the divisions to attend the 1998 general assembly last June.

One proposed constitutional amendment this time around seeks to abrogate the provision of 10 bonus votes for candidates for the posts of party president and deputy president.

The awarding of the bonus votes, introduced in the 1993 party elections, will be replaced by a percentage system.

The proposed new system would require a candidate standing for the post of party president to garner at least 30 per cent of the nominations, deputy president (20 per cent), vice president (10 per cent) and Supreme Council member (five per cent) from the 165 Umno divisions.

In the 1993 party polls, the bonus votes system was used in the nomination of Tun Ghafar Baba and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for the deputy president post apart for the nomination of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the presidency.

Ghafar, then the incumbent, only received seven nominations or 70 bonus votes while challenger Anwar, then vice president, obtained more than 140 nominations or more than 1,400 bonus votes.

Ghafar pulled out from the race upon realising that he had no chance of retaining his deputy president post.

Another proposed amendment seeks to insert a new clause providing for life time expulsion from the party if a member stands as an independent or opposition party candidate against Umno in a general election.

Another amendment proposes that a person should be an Umno member for at least two years before being eligible to stand in branch elections unless it is a new branch, minimum three years membership to stand in divisional polls and three years for central-level positions.

However members of the now defunct Parti Semangat 46 are exempted from this provision since they were readmitted into Umno before these constitutional amendments.

Another proposed amendment seeks to allow five officials to automatically represent each party division to the general assembly namely the division chief, deputy chief and vice chief as well as the Youth and Wanita heads.

A division can choose not more than seven others as delegates.

With this amendment the number of delegates to the Youth and Wanita assemblies will each be reduced from 30 to 10.

-- BERNAMA

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