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Umno bars contest for top post of divisions

IN A move to reduce tension in the run-up to party elections on March 12-29, the Umno Supreme Council last night decided to cut down on the number of contests for the posts of division head.

In saying that efforts should instead be focused on resolving the country's economic problems, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the party president, noted this will not only save cost as fewer meetings have to be organised, but also help prevent money politics in the elections.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the monthly meeting of the Umno Supreme Council at the party's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir, who is also the Prime Minister, said:

"We have decided that Supreme Council members who are currently heads of division should not be challenged, while Supreme Council members who are not heads of divisions should also not challenge the incumbents in the divisional elections."

He also said the meeting has agreed that all heads of division in Kelantan should not be challenged.

"We have not decided on the other posts, but we do not want any contest for the posts of division head.

"No decision has been made on the form of action to be taken against members who fail to comply with this directive... but we have our own way to deal with it," he said.

As this is the decision of the Supreme Council and allowed for by the party constitution, there should not be any question of whether to observe the decision, Dr Mahathir added.

Meanwhile, Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the meeting endorsed recommendations made by the Disciplinary and Management Committee to expel seven members for helping the opposition in the Sungai Bakap, Penang, state by-election in November last year, and two for being active in the Jempol Umno division despite having had their membership suspended earlier for alleged money politics.

Anwar also announced the suspension of five members for causing chaos at recent branch meetings.

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