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Mahathir-S46

EX-S46 MEMBERS CAN BE CANDIDATES IN GENERAL ELECTION - MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight former members of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) who re-joined Umno are eligible to be nominated as candidates in the upcoming general election although they have yet to fulfil the five-year membership ruling.

"This decision was made after they (S46 members) returned to Umno," the Prime Minister and Umno president told reporters after chairing the supreme council meeting at party headquarters, here.

He said the five-year membership ruling applied to those joining Umno as new members.

Dr Mahathir said he had to clarify the matter following his statement at the closed-door pre-council meeting yesterday that a person must be an Umno member for five years before he was eligible to be a candidate in the general election.

He said ex-S46 members were full-fledge Umno members.

"There is no discrimination against them," he said.

Asked if the decision to allow former S46 members, who are now in Umno to be eligible to contest in the general election, would go down well with Umno members, Dr Mahathir said: "As far as we are concerned, they are Umno members. They are not S46 members. They are Umno members.

" You don't discriminate or differentiate between Umno members and S46 Umno members," he said.

He said Umno members must be ready to accept whoever as members of the party.

Calling on party members not to make it an issue, he said: "Members must be ready to accept whoever is a member. And even those who are not members (of Umno) should be ready to accept them if they want to join Umno."

Asked if the move to allow ex-S46 members to contest in polls was an indication that former S46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah would be appointed to head Kelantan Umno, Dr Mahathir said: "No. this is only a clarification."

Asked whether Umno had plans to strengthen Kelantan Umno such as appointing Tengku Razaleigh as the State Umno liaison chief, Dr Mahathir said he had not thought about it yet.

He also said the supreme council was satisfied with preparations for the 53rd Umno General Assembly tomorrow.

The council was also satisfied with the smooth conduct of the Youth and Wanita assemblies today.

Dr Mahathir also said newly-appointed Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Adnan Yaakob took his oath as a supreme council member tonight.

-- BERNAMA

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