

19 DEC 1999

Mahathir-Umno

UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL TO MEET TWICE A MONTH

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council, which has been meeting once a month, will from now on hold two meetings a month.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president, said there were many matters that could not be deliberated on by the council when it met only once a month.

"We normally meet once a month but we have many matters that could not be discussed during the meetings. Because of that we feel it makes sense to meet more frequently," he told reporters after chairing a council meeting today.

Dr Mahathir said today's meeting, the first after the Nov 29 general election, discussed the results of the election and analysed the reasons for the reduced votes obtained by Umno.

He said among the reasons identified was that PAS made wild allegations in its campaigns. The party allegedly claimed that the menteri besar of Negeri Sembilan reared pigs and that the prime minister did not recognise ulamas.

Dr Mahathir said PAS also circulated forged letters purportedly written by him.

He accused PAS of distributing forged letters of appointment of Barisan Nasional (BN) candidates purportedly issued by Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob using Umno's letterhead.

Appointment letters for BN candidates are actually issued by Dr Mahathir and they carry the BN letterhead, he said.

Citing another case, Dr Mahathir said PAS had produced a letter purportedly written by him to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak but the signature was not his.

Dr Mahathir said another lie spread by PAS was that a church was being built on a piece of land belonging to him.

"We are gathering all these materials to be studied and to consider possible actions to explain that these are lies and slanders," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the explanation could not be made earlier as the lies were spread within a short period during the election campaign.

The Umno president said another factor for the reduced support received by the party was weaknesses within Umno itself.

Some members, he said, were too fanatical in their support for certain leaders and when these leaders were not chosen as candidates, the party's election machinery could not be activated in the respective areas.

Dr Mahathir said all suggestions made by supreme council members would be looked into and necessary actions taken.

On Umno's loss to PAS in Kelantan and Terengganu, he said the Umno chiefs in the two states had given their explanations and "we have taken note of that".

Dr Mahathir said today's meeting also discussed acts of betrayal by party members but no action was decided as this would be done by the party management and disciplinary committee.

The prime minister denied that his former political secretary Datuk Saad Man was involved in a pact to sabotage during the nomination for the general election

A newspaper today quoted Saad as saying that he had resigned from the post and was not sacked.

The report said Saad would be among those who face disciplinary action

for acting against the party.

On the date for Umno polls, Dr Mahathir said it was supposed to be discussed at today's meeting but the council decided to postpone the matter to its next meeting.

-- BERNAMA

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