

10 JAN 2000

Ghani-Contest

ALL JOHOR UMNO DIVISIONS SUPPORT NO CONTEST STAND

MUAR, 10 Jan (Bernama) -- The 20 Umno divisions in Johor support the party's Supreme Council stand that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad be retained unopposed as Umno president and that only Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi be nominated for the deputy presidency.

"All Umno divisions in Johor support the stand (taken by the Supreme Council on Jan 3) aimed at preventing a contest that can affect party unity," state Umno chief Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said today.

Ghani, who is the menteri besar, said Johor Umno also would not restrict the number of its leaders vying for the vice-president's and Supreme Council member's posts during the party elections in May.

The decision not to restrict contest for these posts was reached at a meeting of Johor Umno on Jan 4, he told reporters at his Aidilfitri open house in his kampung in Sungai Mati near here.

"We should not make an issue of the number of candidates. We accept the divisions' endorsement and support, there should be no limit, irrespective of the number (of candidates)," he said.

Ghani said there should be contest for the posts as Umno practised democracy.

"Therefore, it is the right of any member to offer himself as a candidate and be considered by other Umno members," he said.

The members must, however, be disciplined at the same time to prevent unhealthy practices in the election process, he added.

Meanwhile, Deputy Human Resources Minister Dr Abdul Latif Ahmad said he supported the stand that there be no contests for the Umno president's and deputy president's posts as the move would strengthen party unity.

"The Supreme Council recommendation shows that Umno has its own methods of resolving internal problems and the move will also strengthen the party," he said.

Dr Latif, who is the MP for Mersing, said although some people viewed the Supreme Council's stand as undemocratic, that was the way Umno dealt with internal issues.

--BERNAMA

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