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FT, Perlis endorse 'no contest' advice

PUTRAJAYA, Tues. - The Federal Territory and Perlis Umno committees have endorsed an Umno supreme council suggestion that the party presidency and the deputy presidency be uncontested.

Johor and Melaka are the other States that have officially backed the council's advice.

Perak and Pahang are expected to follow suit. Perak Umno will discuss the matter next week.

Pahang Umno liaison chief Datuk Adnan Yaakob said today the State party liaison committee would meet next week to discuss several issues, including nominations for the Umno elections.

"I don't expect any problem. We'll abide by the Supreme Council's decision," Adnan told reporters after attending a session on leadership for 100 Umno members at the Prime Minister's Department here.

At its last meeting in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 3, the council resolved that Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad be re-nominated for the presidency.

It also nominated Deputy Prime Minister and party vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for the No 2 post.

Abdullah has been performing the duties of party deputy president since the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998.

At the meeting, the council also proposed that there be no contest for the two posts in the upcoming party elections.

Adnan said: "I believe allowing a contest could split the party. At times democracy, with its imperfections, can disunite. Why can't we adopt the council's decision as a means to preserving party resilience?"

Also speaking to reporters after the party function, Federal Territory Umno liaison chairman Datuk Suleiman Mohamed said all 11 party divisions there had decided to abide by the council's advice.

It was crucial that Umno should not occupy itself with the scramble for positions at a time when dealing with its enemies was more important, he said.

"We're still facing Pas, Keadilan and other opposition parties. If there's a struggle for top party posts, how are we to face our enemies outside," he said.

Perlis Umno liaison chief Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said that in the interest of party unity, all the three party divisions in the State fully supported the council's decision.

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