

07/03/2000

Nomination for all posts (HL)

Abdul Razak Ahmad; Chok Suat Ling

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Umno supreme council today ruled that all divisions must, from now, nominate candidates for all posts for the May party elections at their annual delegates' meetings.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the rule applied to all posts, including that of the president and deputy president.

The Prime Minister said the rule also included the Kubang Pasu division, of which he is the chairman.

From the time Dr Mahathir became Prime Minister in 1981, the Kubang Pasu division has abstained from nominating any one for any post. This was to ensure no one would misconstrue it as a "directive" from the party president.

"All divisions must nominate fully and not leave any vacancy, but for those which have done so, we will allow it," he told a Press conference after chairing the council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn.

"When the supreme council advised that there be no contest for the posts of president and deputy president, it meant they should nominate the incumbent for president and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who has been carrying out the duties of deputy president, for the post of deputy president."

Dr Mahathir said the council, however, ruled as valid the Tawau division's decision on Thursday to nominate only two names for the three posts of vice-president.

He said this when asked about the status of the nominations made by the Tawau division which was the first to hold the meeting.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council "allowed it" as Tawau held its meeting prior to the directive and, therefore, did not contravene party procedures.

Asked whether a candidate nominated by a division must declare early on whether he accepted the nomination or not, he said there was no need for that.

"If the person nominated does not want (to accept), he can make a statement that he does not want (the nomination), either early or after he hears about the number of divisions which have nominated him. That's his right."

The Batu Gajah division, which held its meeting on Sunday, had not nominated Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for the vice-presidency, despite having made a proposal to that effect, because it apparently did not know whether the Kelantan Umno chief would accept the nomination.

Asked about the suggestion by the Papar division to review the rotation system of appointment of the Chief Minister for Sabah, Dr Mahathir said: "That is a suggestion."

On reports that several branch delegates had boycotted some divisional meetings, Dr Mahathir said the number was small.

Records show only 0.3 per cent of the party's 17,411 branches nationwide faced such a problem.

Dr Mahathir said he had held a meeting with division heads to get feedback from them on ways to strengthen the party.

He said he found the feedback very useful. As such he plans to meet the heads of Umno Youth and Wanita and to continue his meetings with division heads and other groups.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob, who was present, said

after receiving a list of nominations from all divisions, the party headquarters would contact those nominated to determine whether they accepted the nominations or not.

"They will then have to give an official answer," he said.

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