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Mahathir-Constitution

SPECIAL UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO BE HELD ON NOV 18

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- A special Umno general assembly to amend the party's constitution will be held on Nov 18, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that a Supreme Council meeting would be held prior to the special general assembly to finalise the proposed amendments.

"We will need to give two weeks' notice in accordance with the constitution. Therefore, before the 14-day period, we will have a Supreme Council meeting to finalise the proposed amendments," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing a Supreme Council meeting which lasted over four hours at the Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Dr Mahathir said that today's meeting discussed the overall proposed amendments.

"We have discussed the overall (proposed amendments) but today we've only discussed them, expressed views but have not decided on what are the changes to be made," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that among the proposals was that the election to the Supreme Council be made at the divisional level and not at the Umno general assembly.

"As such, this is also what we are studying...could we possibly have this election at the divisional level, what are the problems, what will be the obstacles, whether it will be effective in curbing money politics," he said.

Another matter discussed was how frequent the Supreme Council election should be held, and there was a suggestion that there should only be one election for a Dewan Rakyat term, he said.

Also proposed was that the Supreme Council election be held about a year after the general election, he said.

Yesterday, Umno Constitution Amendment Committee chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said that among the proposals received was that the party election at all levels be held simultaneously after an election was held.

The prime minister said that there was also a proposal that the quota system for nominations in the party election be abolished.

Muhyiddin was reported to have said yesterday that the nomination system may be replaced by a system whereby those wishing to contest for certain posts could register themselves as candidates.

Responding to a question, Dr Mahathir said that the divisional election would proceed as scheduled next year.

"There will be one next year, then after that we will enforce the (constitution amendment)," he said.

He also said that the Supreme Council agreed to the debate between Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishamuddin Tun Hussein and PAS Youth chief Mahfuz Omar.

However, Dr Mahathir said that the date and moderator of the debate on the future of the Malays had not been decided.

Asked on the visit to Malaysia by Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid starting tomorrow, Dr Mahathir said there was no particular stress on any particular subject.

"But generally, we will speak about bilateral relations, Asean and maybe on the Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem)," he said.

Asked to comment on the leadership tussle of the Malaysian Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) between Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Dr Mahathir said: "I feel it is good if a youth association is led by the youth. In this case, it is led by old people...it doesn't look so nice."

"Youthful people must be led by the youth. That's my view...I'm not directing them in any way," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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