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Supreme council to consider objections to amendments

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Objections by Umno division heads to proposed amendments to the party constitution will be taken up at the party's next supreme council meeting for further deliberation, party deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today during a Press conference after meeting party division heads, here.

The meeting was held to get their reaction to the proposed amendments which Umno will table at an extraordinary general assembly on Saturday.

The council, he said, will hold a meeting before the assembly.

Asked whether the views expressed by the divisional heads counted, Abdullah said, "Umno is not a party which closes its ears to what people are saying. We are a very open party, something which people do not know about.

"They think that (party president) Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad hands down instructions to the party all the time. This is not the case," he added.

Of the discussions which took place during the two-and-a-half hour meeting, Abdullah said he highlighted two of the proposed amendments.

The first, he said, was that the party's divisional and supreme council elections be held after each general election.

Discussions, he said, centred on whether the term of service for supreme council members should be shortened, or increased to five years.

Currently, Umno office bearers at branch, division and supreme council levels serve a three-year term.

Another topic of discussion was on the minimum number of nominations needed for a candidate to contest for positions in party elections.

On the proposal contained in the Second National Economic Consultative Council report that the retirement age for civil servants be extended, Abdullah said it would be considered by the Government. However, the report has yet to be submitted to the Cabinet.

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