

06 mar 2000

Mahathir-Tawau

TAWAU NOMINATIONS FOR VEEP POSTS VALID, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, March 6 (Bernama) -- The Umno supreme council today ruled as valid the Tawau Umno division's decision to nominate only two candidates for the three vice-president's posts.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the division's decision did not contravene provisions in the Umno constitution.

He, however, said while the division's decision had been accepted, the other divisions should nominate three names for the three posts.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was speaking to reporters after chairing the supreme council meeting.

Besides the vice-presidency, the divisions should also make nominations for president, deputy president and for the 25 elected supreme council seats.

"This means they should nominate the incumbent for president and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who has been performing the duties of deputy president (for deputy president," he said.

This is in line with the supreme council's advice that the two top posts should not be contested in the May 11 party elections.

The supreme council decided at its meeting on Jan 3 that Dr Mahathir be renominated for the president's post and Abdullah be the only candidate proposed for the Number Two post.

The Tawau division, the first to hold its delegates' conference, only nominated Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam and Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad for the vice-president's slot on Thursday.

So far, 16 divisions had held their delegates' conferences.

All had nominated Dr Mahathir and Abdullah for president and deputy president's posts, respectively.

Dr Mahathir said the Kubang Pasu division headed by him also need to nominate the candidates for all posts.

In a move to remain neutral, the division abstained from nominating candidates for all posts up for grabs in the last party elections in 1996.

Dr Mahathir said it did not necessarily meant that if there was no contest for a post, then divisions need not make nominations.

"All divisions must make full nominations (for all posts) without leaving any vacant slots. They must nominate for president, deputy president, vice-presidents and 25 supreme council members," he said.

Asked whether candidates had to state their willingness to contest the posts they had been nominated for, he said it was not necessary.

"They (divisions) can nominate but if the nominee declines to contest, he can issue a statement to announce his decision either now or after he had known the nominations made by several divisions," he said.

He said it was the candidates' right to state whether they would contest or otherwise based on the nominations received.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said he had instructed for preparations to be made for the Sanggang by-election following the death of its assemblyman Datuk Abdullah Kia on Feb 6.

He said Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob would head the team from the BN's headquarters while Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob would coordinate the campaign for the by-election.

BN component parties from other states were also required to assist their Pahang counterpart in the election campaign, he said.

On the proposal by the Papar Umno division in Sabah urging the government to review the rotation system of the Sabah Chief Minister's post, he said the government consider the proposal.

Delegates attending the division's meeting in Kota Kinabalu yesterday supported a proposal that a memorandum be sent to the supreme council calling for a review of the rotation system.

In making the proposal, division deputy chief Datuk Abdul Rahim Ismail said the rotation was no longer relevant in the context of the state's current political scenario.

Under the system introduced after the BN took over the state administration in 1994, the chief minister's post is rotated every two years among the Muslim Bumiputera, non-Muslim Bumiputera and the Chinese.

-- BERNAMA

ES TS