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It's ACA for guilty parties, Dr M warns Umno members

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Umno members, including elected divisional chiefs and defeated candidates, found guilty of money politics will be reported to the Anti-Corruption Agency, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir said apart from disciplinary action taken against the members by the party's disciplinary board, legal action would also be instituted against them by the ACA.

"It does not mean that a person's position is safe if they have already won in the divisional election. If our investigations prove that they have resorted to money politics to win, then we can still take action against them.

"Also, those who have lost are not spared as they too are subjected to the same action both by the party and the ACA, if found guilty."

Dr Mahathir said this to reporters after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters.

He said the decision was unanimously agreed upon by all supreme council members during the meeting.

"We will give our full support to the ACA. Our decision today reflects our seriousness in fighting money politics as we regard those who resort to this as betraying the party's struggles."

On Puteri Umno, Dr Mahathir said all party members especially those from Wanita Umno should help the newly-established movement to recruit members.

"We urge all quarters in Umno to give their full support to Puteri Umno and help them to recruit members and carry out their activities."

On the proposed Malay unity talks between Pas and Umno, he said Umno was still interested in having the discussions but would not agree to the two pre-conditions set by Pas before the talks took place.

"We regret that Pas is setting such pre-conditions as it shows that they are not serious about Malay unity. It is as if they feel that Malay unity is something opposed to Islamic teachings.

The two pre-conditions set by Pas are to restore the party's right to publish its official newsletter Harakah twice weekly instead of twice a month and to re-instate Petronas petroleum royalty payments to Terengganu.

Dr Mahathir also expressed his regret over Pas deputy president Abdul Hadi Awang's decision not to retract the Amanat Haji Hadi (Haji Hadi Decree).

"The decision shows that he does not respect the decision made by the National Fatwa Council which was of the opinion that the decree was contrary to Islamic teachings.

"We would study the type of action to be taken to ensure that the council's decision is accepted by all parties."

Dr Mahathir was also asked on the outcome of the disciplinary board's investigation on complaints by Kuantan division head and Beserah State Assemblyman Datuk Fauzi Ahmad alleging money politics in the divisional election.

"A preliminary report has been submitted to me and party deputy president (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi).

"However, the investigations have not been completed and thus no decision has been made on the matter."

The Umno supreme council set up a special ad-hoc committee under the disciplinary board during a meeting on March 31 to look into the issue.

The committee headed by Tan Sri Zaki Tun Azmi had a three-hour meeting with Fauzi on the matter on April 5. The other members of the committee are Tan Sri Ahmad Razali Mohd Ali and Datuk Nakhaie Ahmad.

To a question if there would be a Cabinet re-shuffle following the failure of a Deputy Minister and a Parliamentary Secretary to be elected as Umno division head, Dr Mahathir said: "Their failure has no effect on the Government.

"We cannot afford to reshuffle the Cabinet everytime someone loses in party elections."

Among those who have lost in their bid to be elected in the on-going division elections are Deputy Education Minister and supreme council member Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin and Education Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Mahadzir Mohd Khir.

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