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Mahathir-Investigation

UMNO SETS UP SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE FAUZI'S ALLEGATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Umno will immediately set up a special ad hoc committee to investigate all the allegations made by Beserah state assemblyman Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman.

He said the investigation would cover the allegations of money politics and abuses in the government and a company as mentioned by Fauzi.

"The Kuantan Umno division (delegates) meeting will be postponed until the investigation is completed," he told a media conference after chairing the Umno supreme committee meeting, here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said Fauzi had yet to resign as the Beserah state assemblyman.

"Where Umno is concerned, we don't want him to resign but we have no way of forcing him (not to)," he said.

The prime minister said the special committee would be set up by the party's disciplinary board and its members would comprise neutral individuals.

"We ask all parties to cooperate by supplying clear proof so that action can be taken against those involved in money politics and other offences as alleged by Datuk Fauzi," he said.

Yesterday Fauzi said he was vacating the Beserah state seat, which is under the Kuantan parliamentary constituency, after the majority of the Umno branches did not nominate him to defend his post as the Kuantan Umno chairman in the divisional elections next month.

He alleged that he was not nominated because of money politics.

On Fauzi's position, Dr Mahathir said the Beserah state assemblyman did not ask to resign in the letter he submitted to Pahang Umno liaison chairman Datuk Seri Adan Yaakob yesterday.

"It is not a resignation letter. A state assemblyman can resign by submitting a resignation letter to the (state assembly) speaker," he said.

The question of resigning was up to Fauzi but Umno would act on his allegations to determine whether the allegations had any basis, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in his letter to Adnan, Fauzi did not clearly state his position to resign as state assemblyman because Fauzi had said that he wanted to remain in Umno.

Asked why special attention was given to Fauzi's allegations when the party's disciplinary board had received other allegations of misconduct of Umno members, he said:

"Attention is given to Fauzi's allegations because he wants to do something that can do damage to the party, the others are only complaints, that's why we give attention."

Asked about the position of Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, who had been implicated in Fauzi's allegations, while the committee conducted the investigation, Dr Mahathir said he would carry on his duties as usual.

Umno, he said, held to the assumption that a person was innocent unless proven guilty.

Dr Mahathir said the investigation would also include Fauzi's police report against Khalil on Wednesday alleging irregularities when Khalil was Pahang menteri besar.

"We check and see. At the same time, I want to remind those making allegations of money politics that if their claims are found to be

unfounded, we will take action against them.

"One must have basis to make allegations because they will adversely affect the party," he said.

He also announced the appointment of supreme council member Azalina Othman as head of Puteri Umno.

He also said that all menteris besar from Umno who are not supreme council members would be allowed to attend the council's meetings in future.

Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, when asked whether Fauzi's allegations would strengthen PAS, said it would not because the spirit of Umno members was still strong.

He said the misunderstanding within the party was not confined to Pahang alone but also occurred periodically in the other states.

He said Pahang had recouped after facing various tests and he was confident that it would be able to do the same again.

-- BERNAMA

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