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Mahathir-Umno

UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR POSTPONED

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- The Umno supreme council elections, scheduled for next June, have been postponed to a date to be fixed.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the postponement was to enable the party to focus on preparations for the general election.

The decision was made by the supreme council at its meeting here today, the Umno president said.

"It is the supreme council's prerogative to postpone the elections for up to 18 months," he told a media conference after the meeting.

Dr Mahathir said the postponement was necessary so that the party members could concentrate fully on preparations for the general election.

"We don't know when the general election will be held but we know that we'll be having an election and we feel that we should not distract the Umno members from focusing on the election," he said.

Asked how Umno would determine candidates for the general election if the supreme council elections were postponed, he said the candidates were selected not solely based on the position they held in the party.

"Actually, we will choose whom we want to. If we select only those in the party, then others will not have a chance," he said.

On the challenge which the Barisan Nasional (BN) expected to face in the election, Dr Mahathir said the opposition was beginning to panic.

"I hear that the opposition parties are now having butterflies in their tummies because the 2.8 million voters that they have transferred to help them will return to their respective constituencies and there will be no more manipulation.

"They did not actually win, they won by cheating, transferring voters. That's why they won, otherwise they would not have won," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded Umno members that those who lodge police reports on party matters would face disciplinary action, including expulsion from the party.

He said the supreme council would direct the party's disciplinary board to call up the member concerned to get an explanation before any action was taken.

"There's a likelihood that disciplinary action, including expulsion from Umno, will be taken against those who lodge police reports, he said.

He also said that Umno felt that the two MCA state assemblymen in Penang who had breached party discipline should be sacked from the BN.

However, the matter must be decided by the BN, he added.

The two assemblymen, Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) had breached party discipline by abstaining from voting against a motion moved by the opposition in the Penang state assembly recently.

-- BERNAMA

AFY MAM RZS JK