

22 NOV 2003

Abdullah-Protem

NOT MUCH CHANGES EXCEPT FOR FOUR DIVISIONS IN KELANTAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council (MT) today dropped four division heads in Kelantan from the list of protek committees in a move to strengthen the party to face the general election.

The MT also decided to retain the present division heads in the party's list of protek committees in Terengganu and made minor changes in other states like moving some of the existing heads to the new divisions.

This was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to the media after chairing a special MT meeting here.

"In principle, we retain all those who had won in the general election as well as the party election, but in Kelantan, the rationale is that Umno is in a state under opposition rule," he said.

Those who were dropped were Pasir Mas division head Datuk Ibrahim Ali who was replaced by Datuk Rahim Abdul Rahman, Bachok division head Datuk Ahmad Shahabuddin Mohd Noor (replaced by Datuk Dr Awang Adek Hussin), Kuala Krai head Datuk Wan Zaid Wan Abdullah (replaced by Datuk Romzi Abdul Rahman), and Kubang Kerian head Tuan Mohd Hashim Tuan Yaacob (replaced by Datuk Ahmad Rosli Ibrahim).

Commenting further on the changes in the line up, Abdullah, who is also acting Umno president, said they were made after taking into consideration the need to make changes in Kelantan to strengthen the party machinery.

He said the MT decided to make only minor changes although, in principle, there was a need to make a major reshuffle in the state.

"So, we chose to make a slight change and we follow the recommendation of the Kelantan Umno Liaison Body," he said.

Abdullah said all decisions made were final and everyone was asked to accept them with an open mind in the interest of the party.

"(They) can't protest, I hope they won't protest," he said stressing that if there was any protest, it would breach party discipline.

"We gave it much thought, we did not do it in haste...we have looked into it for a long time, we studied, we took more than three hours to discuss it during the management committee meeting...we want to ensure that what was done was in the best interest of the party and not the individuals, nor any group, not for any particular gang," he said.

Commenting on Terengganu, Abdullah said the party leadership was satisfied with the tasks performed by all divisions in the state.

"The divisions in Terengganu have worked earnestly to strengthen the party," he said.

Asked whether all those selected would become candidates in the general election, the Prime Minister said candidacy for the general election was a different issue.

"The general election is a different story, there's no guarantee, there's no principle, there's no law that says those sitting in the divisional committees will become candidates (for the election)," he said.

Meanwhile, commenting further on the list of protek committees, Umno executive secretary Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, when met by reporters subsequently, said the changes made included that of the head for Kubang Pasu division.

He said as former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was also head of the division, had stated that he would not hold any post in the party, the MT had decided to appoint former Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff as protek head of the division.

In addition, three State Umno Liaison heads would each lead two divisions, he said.

They included Tengku Adnan himself, who is head of the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory Liaison Body, who had been made protem head of Seputeh division and the new constituency Putrajaya, Pahang Umno Liaison head Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob (Bentong and the new constituency of Indera Mahkota), and Selangor Umno Liaison Body head Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo who holds the Sungai Besar and the Serdang new division.

Asked on the rationale of the move, Tengku Adnan said it was the wish of the party leadership that the Liaison Heads themselves looked after the new areas until they were stable to face the general election.

Asked whether these divisions had problems, Tengku Adnan said: "From the reports received about the new areas, maybe there is no leadership and some other problems there."

Also included in the list of protem committees were Umno vice president Tan Sri Muhammad Mohd Taib who had been appointed protem head of new division Kelana Jaya, Datuk Abdul Aziz Shamsuddin (Gopeng - he was previously acting head), Datuk Noh Omar (the new area of Tanjung Karang), and Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad (the new area of Batu Kawan).

He said the Prime Minister would remain as the protem head for Kepala Batas.

-- BERNAMA

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