

11 JAN 2003

Sabah-Umno

UNDERMINING SABAH UMNO LEADERSHIP EPISODE CLOSED, SAYS MUSA

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- Sabah Umno chief Datuk Musa Aman said the party is putting to rest the recent issue arising from a remark that certain groups are out to undermine his leadership.

Describing the matter as a non-issue, he reiterated that Sabah Umno remained strong and united.

"We consider the issue closed...it does not exist anymore. We do not want to waste time on trivial matters like this as there are bigger things to do like working to increase party membership and preparing for the election," he told reporters after chairing the state Umno meeting.

The issue came to light when Sabah Umno Youth Chief Tawfiq Abu Bakar Titingan was reported on Jan 5 as saying that there were groups in and outside Umno undermining Musa's leadership.

The movement later clarified that the statement was speculative and not targeted at any group in particular.

On the contrary, Musa, who is State Finance Minister, said Umno was strengthening its position in Sabah with a current membership of 413,000, of which, 324,000 are registered voters.

On matters discussed at today's meeting, Musa said, they deliberated on the preparations for the ground-breaking ceremony of the party's RM35-million building to be performed next month by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Umno President.

"I've also asked divisional chiefs, assemblymen and Members of Parliament to go to the grassroots in their respective areas to hear and help solve the people's problems," he said.

They were also to conduct an election dry-run to ensure the party machinery was ever ready to face the election should the state assembly was dissolved.

"The term of the current state assembly will end in April next year. The election can be called anytime from now. So, it is better that we are prepared to face it.

"Umno is a party that always maintains a high state of preparedness as if the election is to be held tomorrow," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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