

04 MAR 2004

Election-Meetings

BN AND UMNO HOLD SUPREME COUNCIL MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE ELECTION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah chaired consecutive meetings of the Barisan Nasional (BN) and Umno Supreme Councils at Menara Dato Onn in the Putra World Trade Centre here today to discuss preparations for the 11th general election.

Abdullah, who is BN chairman and acting Umno president, chaired the Umno Supreme Council meeting at 3 pm. The BN Supreme Council meeting is scheduled to be held at 4.30 pm.

The meetings are expected to approve the BN election manifesto.

Parliament was officially dissolved today, paving the way for the general election which must be held within 60 days.

In a brief statement yesterday, Abdullah announced that the King has given his royal consent and signed the declaration of dissolution of parliament, paving way for fresh polls for which the nomination and polling dates will be fixed by the EC in its meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow.

All state legislatures, except for Sarawak, have been officially dissolved to allow for simultaneous state elections. Sarawak had its state election in 2001 and the state government's term ends only in 2006.

Abdullah, seeking a fresh mandate from 10.3 million registered voters, five months after succeeding Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31 last year, has expressed confidence that the BN will secure more than one-thirds majority in the general election.

At stake will be 219 parliamentary seats and 505 seats in 12 state assemblies, expanded respectively from 194 and 394 following the redelineation of electoral boundaries last year.

The BN has a comfortable two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat after winning 152 parliamentary seats in the 10th general election in 1999 while in the state assemblies, the coalition has 280 seats.

The country now is being run by a caretaker government and the scheduled first sitting for this year of the previous parliament on Monday

has been adjourned. The current five-year term of the Barisan Nasional only ends in December this year.

-- BERNAMA

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