

# PM DEFENDS DECISION ON UMNO'S NO-CONTEST RESOLUTION

The Law provides home minister powers to grant exemption to Umno, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has defended Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasion Ismail's decision to allow Umno's no-contest resolution for the top two posts in the upcoming party election.

"He (Saifuddin) has already explained the matter.

"The law requires the Registry of Societies (RoS) to refer (the matter) to the minister and the law provides him certain powers," he said after opening the Kuala Lumpur Park Festival 2023 yesterday.

Anwar said he had also over-ridden decisions made by civil servants in the past, including reversing instructions to allow direct negotiation for projects.

Saifuddin on Tuesday confirmed that Umno was granted an exemption from compliance with Section 13(l)(c)(iv), through Section 70 of the Societies Act 1966, on the resolution made at the party's general assembly to prohibit contests for the posts of president and deputy president.

Under Section 70 of the act, the minister is empowered to use his



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the launch of the Kuala Lumpur Park Festival 2023 in Taman Tasik Titiwangsa yesterday. With him are Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah (left), Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali (second from right) and Federal Territories Department director-general Datuk Seri Rosida Jaafar. BERNAMA PIC

discretion to exempt any registered society from being subject to all or any of its provisions.

Saifuddin said the decision did not involve any personal interest and that those dissatisfied with the exemption given by the RoS could challenge the matter in court.

It was reported that Pas sec-

retary-general Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan and former Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin had criticised Saifuddin's decision to grant the party an exemption.

Anti-graft groups, including Transparency International Malaysia president Muhammad Mohan, had expressed their con-

cerns over Saifuddin exempting Umno from being deregistered under the Societies Act 1996.

Muhammad was quoted as saying if the RoS had found that Umno's "no-contest" resolution was against its constitution, then the minister should "justify his reasons for granting the exemption".