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Muhyiddin - campaign

AVOID CAMPAIGNING AS A TEAM, SAYS MUHYIDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- Candidates vying for the Umno vice-presidents' post in the party elections in October must avoid campaigning as a team to preserve the party's unity, party vice-president, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

"I agree with Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call not to practise the team system in the party elections this time. We can practise other ways of campaigning provided it does not cause a split," he said.

All parties involved in the election must abide by Dr Mahathir's advice and adhere to the code of ethics drawn up by the supreme council, said Muhyiddin, who has offered to defend his post.

"I think party members know that the important question is the party's unity and I'm confident all parties will uphold it. Avoid overzealous campaigning," said Muhyiddin, who is Youth and Sports Minister, to reporters after visiting the national sports complex in Bukit Jalil, here.

Dr Mahathir had recently urged aspiring candidates for the vice-presidency not to form cliques in the run-up to the party elections.

Although this year's party election was expected to be exciting with six candidates joining the fray for the vice-president's post, he said the campaign atmosphere was moderate and was confident that members would elect the candidates based on their track record and ability.

Besides Muhyiddin, other candidates in the race are incumbents Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak and Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib.

The three newcomers are Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar and Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I'm adopting an open attitude and do not want to under estimate anyone. It's up to the members to make their choice, said Muhyiddin, who is also Johor Umno Liaison chief.

Asked about his chances of retaining his post following the move by Syed Hamid, who is also from Johor, joining the fray, he said there was no question of parochialism and was confident that members would assess the candidates on their leadership qualities and contributions to Umno.

Muhyiddin said there was no change in support for him from Johor Umno and all Umno divisions in the state had pledged full support and cooperation to him in his capacity as the state Umno chairman.

He said Umno members from Johor wanted to ensure that the state Umno was represented at the national level.

Muhyiddin, however, refused to comment on the statement by Umno Youth Chief Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik that certain people in the media had their own agenda to decide on the type of leadership in Umno.

He said politicians had the right to express their views and it was up to the readers to evaluate the statements. -- Bernama