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Umno-Muhyiddin

MUHYIDDIN CLAIMS POISON PEN LETTERS SPOILT HIS CHANCES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 11 (Bernama) -- Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who failed to defend his vice president's post in the Umno election yesterday, has claimed that poison pen letters had been distributed to discredit him.

He said that he had not been able to reply to allegations contained in the poison pen letters because of the ban on campaigns.

"If I had gone down to meet the delegates, it would have been deemed as campaigning," he told reporters during tea break at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

Muhyiddin, who came out sixth in the list of seven candidates, said that what had happened could have affected his chances in the contest.

In the 1993 party election, Muhyiddin, who was then Johor Menteri Besar, obtained the highest number of votes to secure one of the three posts of vice president.

He however said that he respected the decision of the delegates because in a contest, there were bound to be winners and losers.

Muhyiddin said that the no-campaign ban was a good move but further clarifications had to be made on certain aspects like how to deal with poison pen letters.

"Aren't poison pen letters a campaign tool? What is a candidate to do to clear himself of allegations in poison pen letters," he said.

He said that delegates could have regarded the allegations in the poison pen letters as the truth as he had not made any attempts to clarify matters due to the ban on campaigns.

Commenting on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he was not planning a cabinet reshuffle although several cabinet ministers had been defeated in the party election, Muhyiddin said that it was the prerogative of the prime minister. -- BERNAMA

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