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Anwar-Statement

NO POLITICAL STATEMENT, UMNO ELECTION CANDIDATES TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Umno Deputy President Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today reminded party election candidates especially those holding ministerial positions to stop issuing political statements in line with party's directive.

"They are however allowed to issue statements related to their duties," he told reporters after opening the Treasury Jogathan/Family Day '96 at the Jalan Duta Government Office Complex here.

In the run-up to October election, the Umno Supreme Council (MT) yesterday decided to strengthen further the ban on campaigning to include statements in the electronic and printed media.

Asked of candidates breaching the latest directive, Anwar said the MT would not hesitate to take action.

But, he said every allegation and complain made would be thoroughly looked into.

"This is important as we can't dismiss the possibility of certain people taking advantage of the situation to mar the image of other leaders," he added.

Anwar, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, said government functions especially important ones should be held as scheduled as this had been agreed to by the MT.

All Umno election candidates had also been reminded about this, he said.

Anwar cited as example the opening of the Labuan Financial Park by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently. Banks wishing to put up congratulatory messages in newspapers in conjunction with the occasion were advised instead to donate the allocation for the purpose to welfare organisations such as the associations for the blind.

"I feel this example following the directive of Bank Negara should serve as the guidelines to others that there is no need to over express our appreciation," said Anwar who is also Finance Minister.

He said, if there were still others who wanted to do so, they could transfer the money to allocation for welfare donations.

According to the directive of party's president, he said Umno election candidates were not allowed to make political statements or place congratulatory advertisements in newspapers in the run-up to the election.

He said they were also strictly prohibited from using money belonging to government's agencies or companies to place advertisements to congratulate a minister or leader who was also a candidate.

"If it's already prohibited, then there's no need for congratulatory messages," he said.

Present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar. -- BERNAMA

ZAB ABG