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Abdullah-Umno

THOSE WISHING TO CONTEST MUST BE SINCERE, SAYS ABDULLAH

SEGAMAT, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today party members wishing to contest top divisional posts must be sincere and not sponsored by any group.

Any attempt to sponsor a candidate to unseat a leader for whatever reason was pitting a person against another, he said.

This was an "unhealthy practice", he said at the simultaneous opening of the Segamat Umno division Youth and Wanita annual meetings, near here.

Abdullah also said that party leaders should avoid quarrelling among themselves, especially at a time when party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was counting on their support to revive the national economy.

Meanwhile, in PORT DICKSON, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said the decision to discourage contests for divisional posts was a joint decision taken by the supreme council members.

All had agreed with the proposal by Dr Mahathir that there be no such contests, she told reporters after closing a Telok Kemang Umno Division administration seminar and special briefing on the current economic situation.

"What the party president had emphasised was that if a divisional head is a supreme council member, we don't contest against him. This is the advice that we have accepted," she explained.

"There are probably leaders who feel they should contest, but we cannot compel them (not to contest), because we have no provisions in the party to do so," she said, adding that if there was consensus within the division it was better not to contest.

Rafidah said divisional contests were not encouraged in the wake of the present economic downturn as the full attention and energy of everyone was needed to help revive the economy.

"If possible, let us give priority to our economy and set aside everything else. That was the intention of the supreme council when we agreed not to encourage contests," she added. -- BERNAMA

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