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Umno will not act in haste, says Sabbaruddin

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Should Umno decide to abolish the 10-bonus vote system, introduced to curb money politics, it will ensure that the new system will help choose only capable and trustworthy leaders.

Secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said Umno would not be hasty in any amendment on the matter.

"We do not want anything that can lead to money politics," he said today when asked to elaborate on proposals from a number of Umno members that the system be done away with to suit the current situation.

"If we want to change the system, we must ensure that the new system is better than this (10-bonus vote system). All of us should be open to changes, but they must be for the better."

The system gives the president and his deputy 10 votes for every nomination from any division. There are 160 Umno divisions in the country.

It was introduced in 1987 to ensure that the wishes of the divisions were not relegated by delegates when they voted at the general assemblies.

Sabbaruddin, who is also Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister, earlier opened the sports and recreation exhibition at The Mall.

He said the proposed amendment to the 10-bonus vote system, if passed, would not necessarily attract many contenders for the top two posts.

"The Umno special committee needs to scrutinise every aspect of the proposals to ensure that only credible leaders with grassroots support be nominated and contest posts in the party," he said.

For example, Sabbaruddin said, the committee was looking into the possibility of having more than two nominations for those who wanted to contest any post, including the top two.

"At present, anyone with only two nominations can contest any post. The committee feels candidates must at least have good support from the members to be eligible," he said.

Sabbaruddin added the party also wanted to ensure that members would not "sell" their nominations to those wanting to contest.

Asked about rumours that party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was not on good terms with his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, he said: "Do not listen to baseless stories." The rumours must have originated from those who wanted to undermine the party, he added.

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