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Abdullah: No Kubang Pasu-Kepala Batas pact

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said nominations for the three posts of Umno vice-president from the Kepala Batas division would be decided by delegates and would not necessarily be similar to those proposed by the Kubang Pasu division.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who is Kepala Batas Umno division chairman, said his division was not working together on the matter with the Kubang Pasu division, which is headed by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I do not have a pact with the president on this (nominations for vice-president and the supreme council).

"However, if both divisions proposed the same names, it's just coincidence," he told reporters after opening the Malaysian International Furniture Fair 2000 here today.

Abdullah was asked to comment on whether both divisions would nominate the same candidates for top posts in the May elections following the supreme council's decision yesterday that all divisions should make nominations for all posts including those of vice-president and supreme council member.

Abdullah is Umno vice-president but is carrying out the duties of a deputy president.

"The delegates will be left to decide on this. I am sure they will make a wise decision.

"What's important is that Umno is given priority and only leaders who can lead and are credible get elected," he said.

The Kubang Pasu division had abstained from nominating candidates for top posts in the 1993 and 1996 party elections because it did not wish to be seen as being partisan.

The Kepala Batas division is scheduled to hold its delegates conference on March 26.

No date has been fixed for the Kubang Pasu division meeting.

(This is because Dr Mahathir, as party head, does not want to be seen as having influenced or endorsed the nomination of any candidate for these positions).

The supreme council which met yesterday decided that all divisions, except for Tawau, must name candidates for the posts of vice-president and supreme council member.

The Tawau division, which met last week, had proposed only two candidates instead of three for the posts of vice-president.

However, the supreme council at its meeting yesterday said these nominations were legitimate as it was not against party rules.

Asked whether the decision by the supreme council, that even the Kubang Pasu division must make the necessary nominations, could be misinterpreted by some as the president (Dr Mahathir) endorsing the list of nominees, Abdullah said this could not be avoided.

"Whatever we do is always misinterpreted by certain quarters for their own benefit," added Abdullah, who is also Penang Umno chief.

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