

09 JAN 2000

Abdullah-Contest

ABDULLAH WILLING TO CONTEST

KEPALA BATAS, Jan 9 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today he is willing to contest the Umno deputy presidency if the party divisions decide that there should be a contest for the post in the May elections.

He said it was up to the Umno divisions to decide whether or not to heed the supreme council's advice that there be no contest for the two top posts in the party.

"I will offer myself for contest," he told reporters at his Hari Raya open house here.

The supreme council, at its meeting on Jan 3, decided that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad be retained as the party president and that only Abdullah be nominated for the deputy presidency.

Abdullah, who is now carrying out the duties of the deputy president, was asked to comment on talk that some divisions wanted a contest for the number two post.

Abdullah, who is Deputy Prime Minister, said the supreme council's decision was only an advice.

"The real decision is in the hands of the divisions and it is up to them whether or not to heed the advice for the sake of party unity," he said.

He said Dr Mahathir had explained the decision and it was not final, nor was it the president's suggestion.

"It was proposed by a supreme council members and the other members also gave the same views, that's what actually happened," he said.

He said that if there were divisions which wanted to make nominations for the deputy presidency, it was up to them but the important thing was the candidate's performance.

About 10,000 people including Pulau Pinang Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Dr Hamdan Sheikh Tahir, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and all the leaders of the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties attended his open house.

-- BERNAMA

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