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`New faces root of money politics'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Too many new faces being proposed for deputy head of Umno Youth at nomination stage may have caused some of the candidates to indulge in money politics, said acting Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein.

"The problem faced by these new faces is that they are not known to many people and in the frenzy of the elections, some may have got carried away and used money politics," he said after launching a counselling symposium today.

Hishammuddin said he would meet all the nominated candidates for the deputy chief's post to find out what they had to go through during the nomination period and how they got themselves nominated.

Describing money politics as "nothing new", he said the youth wing would work out a procedure to introduce candidates to division members.

He said this when asked to comment on the official complaint against Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir for indulging in money politics. The Umno technical committee is investigating the allegations.

Abdul Aziz is the top contender for the deputy Umno Youth chief's post whose only rival for the position is Zein Isma Ismail.

According to a source, an official complaint has also been made to the Umno Management and Disciplinary Committee against Zein.

The committee, which is chaired by Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahamd Badawi, is looking into the matter and has yet to refer the allegations to the Technical Committee.

Meanwhile, candidates for the Youth exco were warned by Youth elections committee deputy-chairman Mokhzani Mahathir to stay away from money politics.

The reminder went to both the movement's candidates contesting in next month's party elections and delegates to the general assembly.

Speaking after a briefing for candidates at Umno headquarters today, Mokhzani said: "We want an election that is transparent and ethical."

He stressed that any candidate found guilty of unethical campaigning, especially money politics, would be severely dealt with.

"Possible actions which can be taken include suspension of membership. This would automatically disqualify them from the contest," he said.

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