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Rafidah-Wanita/BM

NO NEED TO SEEK PM'S INTERVENTION TO AVOID CONTEST, SAYS RAFIDAH

BANGI, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said today there is no need for any Wanita Umno division to seek the party president's intervention to avoid a contest for the top post in the movement.

She said everyone knew that the Umno supreme council had only advised that there be no contest for the presidency and deputy presidency in the May party elections.

"It need not reach the Wanita Umno level. That's really undemocratic," Rafidah told reporters after opening Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Career Day, here.

She was asked to comment on a suggestion by the Pasir Mas Wanita Umno division that party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad advise the Wanita leaders not to contest the Wanita chief's post currently held by Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

Rafidah, who lost the post to Dr Zaharah in the party elections in 1996, had indicated that she might go for the post in May.

The movement's vice-president, Datuk Napsiah Omar, who is the MP for Kuala Pilah, had also expressed her intention to vie for the top post.

Asked if she would reach a compromise with Napsiah to avoid a three-corner fight, Rafidah said it was too early for her to comment.

Rafidah also said that she agreed with Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob's advice that the Wanita Umno leaders should not turn the contest for the movement's top post into a personal conflict.

"Actually the contest will appear hot if many comments are made. So, I'll end my comments. I agree with Pak Lah (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) that the people already know us," she said.

Rafidah said she would only make a final decision on whether or not to contest after all the divisions had held their meetings and made their nominations.

-- BERNAMA

AR JK