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Umno-Rafidah (Deputy)

I NEVER THINK ABOUT BECOMING UMNO DEPUTY PRESIDENT- RAFIDAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Wanita Umno head Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said today she has never contemplated about becoming Umno Deputy President who by tradition also holds the post of Deputy Prime Minister.

"With God's blessings...with Allah's grace, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's heart will open to the person of his choice and we on the part of Umno, be they leaders or members, will abide by tradition," said Rafidah who is International Trade and Industry Minister at a news conference here today.

Rafidah, who is one of the senior Federal Cabinet Ministers from Umno, was asked about the possibility of she being appointed the Deputy Prime Minister.

She replied, "Ooo...mak oii...my thoughts never went up to that level."

The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who retires this October has chosen Abdullah as his successor.

Rafidah said by tradition, the Umno president also held the post of Prime Minister and also the Deputy Prime Minister was also the Umno Deputy President.

Hence whoever was chosen by Abdullah as Deputy Prime Minister should be allowed to hold the post of Umno Deputy President without any hindrance.

"Give the vacant (Umno) deputy president's seat to the person (chosen as Deputy Prime Minister) so that Umno will remain the backbone of the government, so that the Umno President will be Prime Minister and the deputy president the Deputy Prime Minister."

"Then only will Umno be the backbone of the government...only then we can proudly say that the government is led by Umno," she said.

Rafidah said any speculation or calculation on the likely person to be appointed Deputy Prime Minister would only spoil the chances of the candidates concerned.

"If there are people wishing to contest..it is only to satisfy their own urge...it means they do not care about the party leadership."

"Ultimately Allah is the judge...it is important that we remember that.If we stray from this fact, then we are trying to be smart, making calculations, speculations which in the end will be damaging to the people around us," she said.

-- BERNAMA

MS ZS RON AAM