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Najib-Candidates

NAJIB EXPECTS 20-30 PERCENT NEW FACES AMONG UMNO CANDIDATES

KANGAR, June 3 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has predicted that between 20 to 30 percent of Umno's candidates for the next general election would be new faces.

He said the selection of candidates would be done fairly through a comprehensive process that involved getting the views of division, state and federal leaders.

He was speaking to reporters after opening a seminar on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's thoughts in conjunction with the Perlis Umno Convention here today.

"Getting re-nominated or dropped is normal," he said when asked to comment on deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's statement yesterday that candidates would be picked fairly and justly.

In his speech, Najib said the voter registration exercise conducted by Umno among the younger generation was important to ensure Umno and the Barisan Nasional would remain strong in the next general election.

Umno members involved in the exercise should be thorough in their work, said Najib, who is the Umno Voter Registration Committee chairman.

On Dr Mahathir's contributions, Najib said the prime minister had been administering the country excellently, even when the region was facing a major financial crisis in 1997.

When leaders of many other countries were at a loss on how to deal with the crisis, Dr Mahathir came up with a financial policy that had saved the country, said Najib, who is Defence Minister.

"Dr Mahathir has saved the country's economy, politics and integrity during his leadership," said Najib, who is Defence Minister.

He also urged all Umno members to give their undivided support to Abdullah, who will succeed Dr Mahathir when he steps down in October.

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said Dr Mahathir's thoughts were worth analysing as he is the greatest leader the country has ever produced.

Dr Mahathir's visionary ideas were valid not only for the present era but also the future, said Shahidan, who was chairman of the one-day seminar involving 1,000 Umno members.

-- BERNAMA

AD YBY