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Abdullah-Ethics

UMNO'S ELECTION CODE OF ETHICS MAY BE REVIEWED, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Umno's election code of ethics may be reviewed to ensure that party elections held after the next general election do not split the members, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Umno deputy president said the code was basically aimed at preventing misconduct by candidates and ensuring that there were no campaigns or slandering that could split the members.

"We have to issue (the code of ethics) again but not necessarily to that extent (contest for key posts)," he told reporters after launching a Patriotic Essay competition organised by the Overseas Umno Clubs Alumni at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The deputy prime minister told reporters this when asked what formula Umno would use to ensure that elections for key party posts did not cause disunity in the party.

Abdullah said that although key posts could be contested and democracy allowed it, jockeying for posts could have more adverse consequences.

"So, if we all agree that there be no contest, it does not mean that we relegate democracy but that we use a wise approach to jointly take a stand not to have a contest," he said.

Abdullah, who has been named as Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's successor when the prime minister retires in October, was also asked to comment on the party president's statement expressing the hope that the Umno tradition would continue whereby whoever was appointed deputy prime minister could be elected deputy party president without any challenge.

Abdullah said the person appointed as deputy prime minister was also elected as deputy president and this was a traditional practice that had gone down well and need not be changed.

"Otherwise, it will be difficult with one person being the deputy prime minister and another, the deputy president. They may quarrel, and when a person becomes the deputy president, surely he will want the deputy prime minister's post as well.

"This will become an issue for no rhyme or reason and many followers will instigate and poke fire for their own interests, not the party interests," he said.

Abdullah advised the members to stop speculating on the deputy prime minister's and deputy president's posts and the party elections and instead to concentrate on what Umno must do to face the challenges ahead and enhance the country's capability and competitiveness.

"This is a challenge that must be faced jointly, not alone, and the victory will be for everyone and this needs strength and unity in the party," he said.

Earlier, in his speech, Abdullah said all Malaysians must have the formula for patriotism in them to be able to build the strength and capability and increase competitiveness in the globalised era.

He hoped that the young generation would make the patriotic spirit a goal of their love for the religion, race and nation that must be pursued at all times.

He said the patriotic essay competition could guide the young generation to think critically about patriotism and to inculcate it to defend the nation.

The competition has been sponsored by Pembinaan Puncak Cergas for the

last 20 years at a total cost of RM1 million.

It is in three languages -- Malay, English and Arabic -- and is aimed at inculcating the patriotic spirit in students of tertiary institutions locally and overseas.

This year's competition offers prizes totalling RM40,000, including return air tickets for Malaysian students abroad.

-- BERNAMA

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