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Radzi-Money Politics

EVEN THE SMALLEST GIFT CAN BE TERMED MONEY POLITICS, SAYS RADZI

By: Anne Salfarizan Mispani

KUALA LUMPUR, July 20 (Bernama) -- The offer of gifts, no matter how small, to delegates by candidates vying for top posts in the Umno general assembly in September can be misconstrued as practising money politics, party secretary-general Datuk Radzi Sheikh Ahmad said today.

As such, he urged the candidates to steer clear of any practice that could cause them to fall into the trap of money politics.

He said that although some candidates might consider giving gifts as a show of appreciation to their supporters, it could invite misunderstanding among other Umno members.

"Don't make this culture (money politics) a practice to garner support from the delegates," he told Bernama here.

He said the practice of giving gifts, especially during the election season, must be avoided.

"When will this money politics stop. I ask that the practice of money politics be reduced. Although we appreciate those who have supported us don't let's keep on giving gifts," he said.

Radzi said that although the gift might be small in value, like a piece of batik, it was feared that it would become a trend among the candidates.

"Umno members don't need all this (money politics). Why should money politics become a culture in Umno because every time after a contest, rewards must be given. It's not nice," he said.

Asked how serious the problem of money politics was in the Umno elections this time around, Radzi said some Umno candidates were still practising it to gain votes.

"For the elections this time, we have received complaints (on money politics). There's a list," he said, adding that most of the cases involved the giving of cash.

He said that other practices that could be defined as money politics

included paying for tours and feasts in exclusive places, giving expensive gifts and paying for performing the umrah.

He said candidates found to have indulged in money politics could have their candidacies withdrawn or be stripped of the posts that they had won.

"All cases of money politics reported will be scrutinised or tried by the party's disciplinary board," he said.

Radzi advised Umno members to return to Umno's old culture of working sincerely and making sacrifices for their candidates without any hope of reward.

"In the past there was no thought of giving all this. A thank you was enough for sacrificing and working for a friend. In a contest, winning or losing was not a problem like now, terrible," he said.

He said efforts to eradicate money politics had started during the time of former party president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the problem should not occur any more and Umno members now should be wise in making decisions.

-- BERNAMA

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