

17 JUN 2004

Abdullah-Umno

UMNO DIVISIONS CANNOT REFRAIN FROM MAKING NOMINATIONS, SAYS ABDULLAH

PUTRAJAYA, June 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that Umno divisions cannot refrain from making nominations for posts to be contested in the party election in September.

Abdullah, who is acting Umno president, said that under the party's constitution, the Umno divisions, holding their delegates' meetings between July 8 and 22, should also make nominations for all the three posts of vice-president and 25 Umno Supreme Council posts.

"As far as I know, the divisions cannot refrain from making nominations. Secondly, when making nominations, it must be made in full.

For instance, we have (posts of) three vice-presidents, we cannot just nominate one. We must make nominations for all three.

"That's to my knowledge," he told reporters after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of agreement between DRB-Hicom Defence Technologies Sdn Bhd and Agusta S.P.A of Italy here for the marketing and sales of Agusta helicopters in Malaysia and the region.

He was commenting on the statement last Tuesday by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is Umno vice-president carrying out the duties of the deputy president, indicating the possibility of the Pekan Umno division, of which he is the pro tem head, and the Kepala Batas Umno division, of which Abdullah is the pro tem head, not making any nominations due to concern that they would influence the delegates at the party election.

Najib was also reported to have said that some Umno leaders may feel slighted in the event that nominations were made as it could be misconstrued as support for the nonnominated candidates.

Abdullah said that the nominations made by the two divisions need not necessarily be indicative of the candidates which should be elected to the respective posts at the party election.

"We grant all the freedom to our delegates. As for the Kepala Batas delegates, I've never stood up to propose or suggest who should be elected for a particular post. I never give any indication," he said.

When pointed out that nominations for the vice presidency made by the Kepala Batas division would surely be seen as an endorsement, he said people may see it that way.

"They'll say that. It's something we cannot avoid. However, the decision will eventually be made by the Umno general assembly where many of the delegates will be casting their votes, to make their choice," he said.

Responding to a question, Abdullah said that he would seek details from Najib himself over the issue of the exemption of the Kepala Batas and Pekan divisions in making nominations.

"If exemptions can be made, that may also be a good idea. But I'll have to ask my division first. Maybe the division is eager to make nominations. I just need to ask," he said.

Asked on the call by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last night for a review of the honorarium of RM10,000 paid by Penang each year to Kedah for the acquisition of the Penang island and Seberang Perai, the Prime Minister said that the matter should be referred to the Penang government.

"I don't know, the Penang government should be asked. That's merely the view of Tun Dr Mahathir," he said.

Speaking at a reception hosted in his honour at Wisma Darul Aman in Alor Star, Dr Mahathir was reported to have said that the amount was no longer suitable at present as the payment agreement was made during the British colonial rule.

Asked on the reported requests for additional allocations by certain ministries to implement planned programmes, Abdullah, who is also Finance Minister, said that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mustapa Mohamed would table a paper on the Eighth Malaysia Plan on allocations that were still available and how the disbursement would be

made.

"And the Cabinet ministers could respond and make the appropriate decision on the matter," he said.

Abdullah said: "We are in the process of prudent financial management as we have a deficit. As such, there must be disciplined financial management and therefore curbs on our expenditure is crucial.

"But I know that there are ministries requiring additional funds as many projects have yet to be implemented," he said.

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