

02/08/2004

Abdullah: Avoid divisive campaigning

KEPALA BATAS, Sun. - Umno president-elect Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today advised Umno leaders and members to avoid divisive campaigning for party posts.

Stressing the importance of Umno remaining united and strong, Abdullah said he had inherited a united Umno from his predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I hope to continue with his legacy and ensure that Umno not only remains united but also grows stronger," he said, adding that it was his duty to ensure the next generation of Umno leaders inherit an even stronger party.

Speaking after chairing the Kepala Batas Umno meeting, he said the following weeks would see Umno leaders contesting posts in September's party polls seeking support from members.

However, he said, in their pursuit of support, they should avoid money politics at all costs.

He laid out three elements which could split and weaken the party: complacency, abuse of power and money politics.

Members, he said, should not be complacent and neither should those with power abuse it.

"The moment you go off tangent, the party will be affected and it will derail our plans to bring progress to the nation." He said Umno owed its service to the people who had given it the mandate to lead the nation with other Barisan Nasional component parties. He said he was pleased that there had been no untoward incidents during the branch and division meetings which ended today.

Asked about a proposal by Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim that elections for the party's supreme council members be abolished and that the top 25 candidates with the highest number of nominations be automatically elected to the council, Abdullah said for now, the present system was workable.

Shahidan had suggested that his proposal, if implemented, would put a stop to intense lobbying by aspirants.

(END)