

14/05/2003

Rafidah: Smear tactics will backfire on party

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Wanita Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz has called on party members not to use smear tactics to gain party posts as it could backfire on the party.

She said the Opposition could capitalise on slanderous criticism of Umno members in the general election.

"In their enthusiasm to win party posts, members resort to condemning other candidates.

"Don't give the Opposition the opportunity to use it as ammunition to destroy the party," she said at a Press conference after a cheque presentation ceremony for the National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) at the ministry here today.

Also present were Lembaga Totalisator Malaysia chairman Tunku Shahabuddin Tunku Besar Burhanuddin, NCSM executive director Dr Saunthari Somasundaram and NCSM general treasurer Anthony Joseph Skelchy.

Rafidah, who is International Trade and Industry Minister, is NCSM patron.

She was commenting on a news report, quoting Umno Information chief Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayub, that the party had identified the splinter groups causing disunity within Umno.

Megat Junid said the matter would be discussed at the coming Umno disciplinary committee, to be chaired by deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Sunday spoke about the existence of dissatisfied party members who criticised division heads and supreme council members because they were not selected as candidates in general elections or not given any government posts.

Describing them as splinter groups and a disappointed lot, the Prime Minister said their action was causing disunity within the party.

Asked on possible action against these groups, Rafidah said there should be awareness among party members on the implication of slanderous criticism.

"This is not about action, even if we expel them from the party, we cannot shut their mouth.

For me, awareness is important," she said.

She said all Umno members should realise that destroying each other would destroy the party, which in turn would destroy the Government.

Rather than resort to degrading other members, Rafidah suggested that Umno members highlight their own ability.

"Why don't you compete on your ability?

"If you really want the position, why don't you praise yourself and not condemn the others."

Rafidah said after giving all their best to the party, members should leave it to God and they should accept the fate if they are not selected for any post.