

**He will accept it 'with open heart'**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Mar 17, 09**  
**Andrew Ong**

Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today said he believes that Mohd Ali Rustam will accept the Umno disciplinary committee's decision to bar him from contesting in the party polls amicably.

"I believe he is loyal to the party and will accept the decision with an open heart, and will continue to contribute to the party," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

The disciplinary committee has this afternoon announced that Mohd Ali, who is also the Malacca chief minister, is to be barred from vying for the deputy president post due to his agent's involvement in money politics.

According to the incoming Umno president, Mohd Ali's post as chief minister is not affected by today's decision.

The powerful committee also suspended the membership of 10 members, including a state Umno Youth chief, for three years.

### **Protecting party image**

Meanwhile, Najib said the disciplinary committee has the mandate of the Umno supreme council to act as an independent body.

"We won't interfere and they can do anything necessary for the sake of protecting the party's image," he added.

Asked if he is worried that disgruntled supporters will disrupt the party polls, he replied: "As they say, you can't have the cake and eat it. You have to decide, do you want Umno to be seen as a clean party?"

"We realise that there is some risk attached to it, but the biggest risk is if Umno is rejected by the people. We cannot afford that. Everyone has to sacrifice for the sake of the party," he added.

On the discrepancies between the action taken against Mohd Ali, in comparison with vice-president hopeful Isa Samad back in 2004, Najib said the decision lies with the board.

"There is a possibility that the circumstances was different," he said.

### **'Overzealous supporters may be to blame'**

Shortly after winning the 2004 Umno polls, Isa was suspended from the party for three years for breaching party election laws.

Isa was not as lucky as Mohd Ali (pic) today, because the former was the Federal Territories Minister in 2004 but subsequently sacked following his suspension.

To a question, Najib suggested that there were times that the leaders were not at fault, as they were the victims of "overzealous" supporters.

He said that the supporters' actions would then lead to allegations of graft against their leader.

Though he did not elaborate, Najib may be referring to some agents acting for Umno election candidates who are known to have approach party delegates for votes with inducements.

Najib said Umno was trying to reform itself, but it is going to be a long ongoing process. He added that he would announced further reforms to Umno in the future.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/100391>