

Umno Issues Forms Saturday, Launching Election Process

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KUALA LUMPUR, (Bernama) -- Umno is to issue from Saturday, Sept 14 its election candidate registration forms, setting into motion the quest by members for positions in the party in the triennial elections next month.

The party's state liaison committee offices will give out the forms, from 8 am to 5 pm daily, for members who want to contest the main divisional posts or those of the Wanita, Youth and Puteri wings at that level.

The party headquarters will distribute the forms, also from 8 am to 5 pm daily, for members who want to contest positions in the supreme council and the Wanita, Youth and Puteri executive committees.

All potential candidates have a week to decide which position they want to vie for before returning the completed forms by 5 pm on Sept 21.

According to the Registration Form and Election Procedure Rules issued by the party, potential candidates must ensure that the forms are duly completed and bear the eligibility of contest verification from the respective divisions.

The returned forms will be scrutinised by an evaluation committee that will subject them to tight screening, including verifying that the candidates are not bankrupt.

Based on the new electoral system, introduced this year, every Umno member has the opportunity to contest the divisional elections provided he or she fulfils the minimum requirement of having been a party member for one electoral term or three years.

The minimum requirement for candidates vying for posts at the central level, including in the supreme council and as vice-presidents, deputy president and president, is having been a divisional committee member for at least one electoral term.

Prior to the amendment to the party constitution in 2009, a member who wanted to contest a senior position in the party had to garner a certain quota of nominations from the 191 party divisions.

Whatever said and done, beginning tomorrow, political observers will train their focus on every Umno member to evaluate whether they are cutting their coat according to their cloth.

This is because the Umno elections this time around are said to be important and of significance for the perpetuity of Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN) as the ruling party.

Commenting on the matter, National Professors Council political cluster secretary Prof Datuk Abdul Halim Sidek said members offering themselves as electoral candidates should know where they stand and the delegates should make a wise choice.

"Candidates must have leadership qualities such as trust and integrity and must always give

preference to the people," he said, adding that it was unnecessary for members who had overstayed their welcome or were saddled with problems to contest as it would only make it difficult for the delegates to decide.

"At the same time, the delegates must choose wisely. I believe that if the delegates elected candidates with the right qualities, they will be able to return the best leaders to helm the party," he said.

More than that, it is hoped that the candidates would engage in a fair contest without resorting to the "outdated tactic" of money politics and making use of positions to garner votes, he added.

Abdul Halim said the clear signal that had to be sent to the public in the Umno elections this time around was that the party would no longer entertain leaders without integrity.

"The other message that ought to be conveyed is that there has to be an expiry date for leaders because if those who have overstayed their welcome continue to be elected, when are the new leaders going to get the chance to contribute to the party?" he said.

Cheras Umno Division chief Datuk Seri Syed Ali Alhabshee reiterated that party elections were not a time for merry-making but an opportunity to exercise responsibility.

"I advise those who will be collecting the forms tomorrow to vie for positions to ask themselves whether they will be able to transform Umno to keep it relevant.

"We have to think out of the box; we cannot continue to think within our cocoon," he said.

Syed Ali, who had announced that he would not contest any post at the central level, said wide opportunities must be given to the young leaders in keeping with the aspiration of party president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to rejuvenate Umno.

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