

Umno will advise candidates not to get

Dr M: No large

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By K.PWaran

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised candidates in the forthcoming party elections to refrain from holding mass gatherings or using government machinery for their campaigns.

He said since holding large gatherings needed a lot of money this would result in the issue of "money politics" rearing its head.

"I hope all quarters will stop organising large gatherings since small ones will be adequate," he said in response to reporters' questions after opening the "First National Competitiveness" forum jointly organised by the Malaysian Business Council and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

He said such practices were not condoned "no matter who organises it".

In an obvious reference to Saturday's gathering at the Putra World Trade Centre during which two Umno vice-presidents, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, spoke, the Prime Minister stressed that government machinery and civil servants should only be used "to protect" the Government and not individuals in the Government.

About 8,000 people attended the gathering which was attended by Umno members, officers of the Community Development Department (Kemas), the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba, who was scheduled to attend the meeting, did not show up.

Putra World Trade Centre was tight-lipped over who made the booking and who paid for the Saturday function. Enquiries drew a blank.

Sanusi, seen as Ghafar's

staunchest supporter in the forthcoming party elections in November, spoke for more than one hour during which he criticised certain Umno leaders.

He warned that there were enemies within Umno who would destroy the Malays.

On the emergence of "money politics", Dr Mahathir admitted it existed although he said the problem was not as obvious as in some other countries.

"Any role of money in politics is not good. I hope all those concerned would avoid using a lot of money in their political activities.

"Money politics can become serious. It is the thin end of the wedge. It starts small and eventually involves large sums of money.

"This is the characteristic of 'money politics' because it will come to a situation where more and more money would be offered.

"When someone gives RM10, others will offer RM11. It will go on since people can never be satisfied," he said.

Asked what steps would be taken to stop the spread of "money politics", Dr Mahathir said the party would advise the candidates not to be involved in such activities.

He said Umno did not have a body like the Anti-Corruption Agency within the party but added that the activities of those who indulged in "money politics" could be revealed to party members so that members would be aware and not respond to such tactics.

Sanusi had also spoken out against "money politics". In Johor Baru in late July, the Agriculture Minister said politicians who had too much money to spare should donate to mosques or surau instead of indulging in "money politics".

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Money politics

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ing in "money politics".

On Aug 9, Abdullah Badawi, when opening the Bertam Umno division meeting, said Umno would be infiltrated by enemies if "money politics" could influence members in the election of leaders.

He said such tactics could only bring disaster to the party.

gatherings

involved in money politics