

# Umno agrees on independent firm for Sabah audit

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. The Umno supreme council today agreed with the Federal Government's plan to appoint an independent audit firm to check the accounts of the Sabah Foundation and the Sabah Government, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said that it also agreed that the Anti-Corruption Agency be allowed to investigate any possible deviations in the previous Sabah Government.

Speaking at a Press conference after a 3½-hour council meeting at the party headquarters here, Dr Mahathir said it also agreed with the Federal Government's intention to establish an efficient, trustworthy and responsible Government in Sabah.

Asked to elaborate on the scope of the investigation, Dr Mahathir said that Umno hoped it would cover all areas to determine whether there were any deviations in

the companies and subsidiaries of the Sabah Foundation.

Asked how the audit firm would be selected, Dr Mahathir said it was left to the Finance Ministry to decide.

Asked whether the *hudud* issue was also discussed at the meeting, Dr Mahathir said that it was touched in the context of how it was abused by Pas during the Lundang by-election campaign on March 29.

In the by-election, Pas candidate Mohamed Daud obtained 9,270 votes against Barisan Nasional's Nik Abdul Rahman Nik Taib who polled 5,024 votes.

Asked to specify, Dr Mahathir said Pas had issued an inaccurate statement about his speech on *hudud* prior to the by-election.

"It said I intended to make a new interpretation ... it's not I who wanted to do that," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the special Umno general assembly to discuss amendments to the party constitution will be held on June 19. It will be attended by delegates who attended last year's assembly.

He said the amendments

would allow the party to act against members involved in money politics.

"The ruling will be enforced when the amendments are adopted but they will not be backdated," he said.

The decision to amend the party constitution to check money politics was proposed by Dr Mahathir at last year's party general assembly when reacting to widespread criticism from delegates.

The Prime Minister had said that he was willing to propose that a candidate in the party election be disqualified if three members could prove beyond doubt that they had been offered money in exchange for votes.

He had said that a candidate who used the government machinery in the campaign would also be disqualified.

On the party anniversary on May 11, Dr Mahathir said the supreme council decided that State liaison committees would organise appropriate celebrations.

The party headquarters will organise a flag-raising ceremony which will be offi-

ciated by the party deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and a *doa selamat* to commemorate the anniversary.

He said Umno branches in Sabah were required to hold their meetings and elections by this year.

The supreme council approves the applications for membership by Kimanis MP Nurnikman Abdullah, Pensiangan MP Taimin Lumaing (both are former members of Parti Bersatu Sabah) and former Semangat 46 Wanita chief Datin Paduka Rahmah Osman to join Umno.

Asked to comment on a claim by former Sabah Foundation director Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan that a promise was made to him that he would not be removed as its director, Dr Mahathir denied such a promise was made.

"I do not know who promised him. Neither I nor the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chief Minister made such a promise."

Dr Mahathir said Anwar also briefed the meeting on the loss of RM5.7 billion in foreign exchange incurred by Bank Negara.