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Mahathir-Graft

MAHATHIR: UMNO MEMBERS MUST FIGHT GRAFT AND SEEN CLEAN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Umno and government members to steadfastly fight corruption and in this context "they must not only be clean but also be seen to be clean."

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said fighting graft required determined efforts to prevent erosion of Umno and the government's credibility.

"Graft is unhealthy for the party and the government," he said during a 15-minute video tele-conferencing connecting him in London with Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Umno headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir said: "Our friends may be involved. But if we don't take action they may think we'll defend whatever they do since we (the government) have the powers."

The prime minister was visiting the Fraser Nash Research Ltd, UK in the British capital.

Also present at the Umno headquarters were party secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, vice-presidents Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Youth Chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Wanita leader Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and party information chief Datuk Dr Yusof Nor.

The video teleconferencing with Dr Mahathir, who is currently on two-month vacation abroad, took place after Anwar chaired a three-hour-long Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters.

Dr Mahathir said the fight against graft, which got full backing from the Cabinet, should also get solid support from all Umno members.

"Hence I hope this very important undertaking gets the endorsement of today's Supreme Council Meeting," Dr Mahathir said.

Anwar had earlier informed Dr Mahathir that the meeting was just over and that the council had strongly resolved to deal with corruption.

Dr Mahathir asked what was discussed today and whether there were problems.

Anwar replied there were few problems but the council wholly supported measures being taken to maintain a clean image of the party and the government and in dealing with corruption.

The council also discussed declaration of assets and incomes by government officers, elected representatives, executive councillors, chief ministers, menteri besar, deputy ministers and cabinet members.

"The declaration must be truthful and accurate, otherwise it contravenes the law," Anwar said.

At today's meeting, the council was also unanimous in relaying a clear message to the party and government machineries on anti-corruption measures.

During the tele-conferencing, Dr Mahathir told Anwar he was at Fraser Nash to get a first hand look especially at the latest in research into electronic technology and that the centre had created plenty of ideas which could be applied to Malaysia's development programmes.

Dr Mahathir said he was in good health and making the most of his leave to write.

A visibly cheerful Dr Mahathir said in lighter vein: "Everyone is here. I thought I'm alone, but many have joined. There's no privacy at all. I'm supposed to be on holiday but look at this people, they come here and force

me to work. So I'm asking for extra holiday." -- BERNAMA
TEAM RN