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No kenduris, trips Umno divisions told

Ashraf Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Umno has barred all divisions from holding kenduris and organising trips for members in the run-up to the divisional meetings between now and June 30, its secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said today.

The move is to prevent members from lobbying for support in the election of delegates to the general assembly in September.

Speaking to reporters after Umno's management and disciplinary committee meeting chaired by acting president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Sabbaruddin said the decision was taken to ensure that the election of delegates at the divisional level were clean and smooth.

He added that the committee also discussed allegations of RM1.8 million missing from the Wanita Umno accounts.

Sabbaruddin, however, said he was not at liberty to make a statement on the matter, adding that the management committee would make its recommendations to the Supreme Council which would meet tomorrow.

"The Supreme Council will make a decision on the matter," he said.

In April, the Supreme Council had set up a special committee headed by treasurer Tun Daim Zainuddin to investigate the allegations of the missing money held by the previous office bearers.

The three-member committee checked the accounts and called several witnesses including former secretary Habshah Osman and treasurer Siti Zainab Abu Bakar, who is Deputy Primary Industries Minister.

On May 10, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said most of the RM1.8 million which was said to be missing from the accounts had been returned.

He declined to reveal the name of the party involved but added that action would be taken against those responsible if there was evidence of wrongdoing.

Dr Mahathir, however qualified the statement by saying that former Umno chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and successor Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman were not involved.

Sabbaruddin also said that 29 branches have been barred from sending their delegates to divisional meetings for various reasons including allowing non-members into the branch meetings and holding the meetings in the absence of representatives from their respective divisions.

"There are also cases of branches holding their meetings in members' residences, which is not allowed," he said.

Of the 29 branches, 12 are from Perak, Perlis (one), Penang (four), Pahang (five), Selangor (five) and Johor (two).

Sabbaruddin added that a total of 67,618 members of the now defunct Parti Melayu Semangat 46 have been accepted as Umno members.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports that disciplinary action had been taken against two Umno members found to be holding ceramahs for Pas during the recent Permatang and Kuala Selangor by-elections, Sabbaruddin said.

He did not give details on the identity of the two members.

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