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Follow procedures, Umno members told

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MALACCA, Sun. - Umno members have been reminded to follow strictly the party's procedures and ethics to ensure that the branch and divisional meetings are convened smoothly and in the best possible manner.

Party deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said members should also stick to the party's principles so that the meetings could take place accordingly.

"All must bear in mind the significance of having a meeting held in a proper manner and as scheduled. We must make it a point all the time to maintain the noble principles and values of the party."

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with State Umno liaison leaders at a resort, Anwar, who is also Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, also reminded former branch and divisional leaders who were no longer active to co-operate and respect the decisions made at the meetings.

He also said the party's management and disciplinary committee, of which he is the chairman, had been given the full mandate by the supreme council to handle cases where there was contravention of party ethics.

"In my meeting with the State Umno liaison members, I had told Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin, who is also Malacca liaison head, to keep tabs on the situation.

"If there is any problem, it must be referred to us for deliberation before appropriate action is taken."

The party's branches will hold their meetings from Feb 16 till March 15, followed by divisional meetings from March 16 to 31.

Early this month, Anwar had said only Umno members who had criminal charges pending against them would not be allowed to contest the party's branch and divisional elections.

He had said the offences included serious ones like corruption and not minor ones like traffic offences.

On Dec 31, Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said members facing criminal charges were not allowed to contest branch and divisional elections.

They were also not allowed to be nominated as delegates to the divisional meetings and the general assembly.

Branch elections are held once every two years. The divisions and the supreme council hold their elections once every three years.

Anwar also welcomed the move by Wanita Umno to set up a special fund, known as the Pelaburan Ehsan Wanita, aimed at assisting the Government overcome the present economic problems.

He said the formation of such a fund was practical and timely as it would encourage women to be involved in economic activities such as investments.

At the opening of the Al-Mohsinin mosque in Pantai Kundur near here, Anwar said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had on numerous occasions emphasised the importance of women taking part in economic activities.

Wanita Umno chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman had said the executive council would play a lead role in the fund which would be launched by Dr Mahathir on Feb 8.

Anwar also urged the people to be grateful as the current economic problems were not as bad as the situation in neighbouring countries.

"This is just a test ... and we must be patient. We must be prepared to

face this test by coming up with solutions. To overcome this, we must have discipline and high spirit."

During the function, Anwar also launched the State Islamic Affairs Department's website.

The RM6.3 million mosque was built by Petronas.

Also present were Abu Zahar, State Umno liaison deputy chief Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam, who is also Deputy Transport Minister, Petronas chief executive Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Marican and State executive councillors.

In Seremban, Anwar chaired a closed-door meeting at Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Samad's residence. Earlier, he attended the terawih and isyak prayers.

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