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Candidates for Umno top posts agree to stop campaigning

Kamarul Yunus

ALL candidates vying for the top posts at Umno's election on May 11 have agreed to cease all contact with delegates who will vote on that day.

Candidates and delegates will not meet, call one another, or communicate via facsimile and other channels until the general assembly next month when the election will be held, said Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The restrictions are part of efforts by the party's leaders to curb corruption and money politics, to avoid suspicions and to ensure that everyone stops campaigning for the election.

All party conventions at state levels will also be deferred until after the general assembly.

Speaking to newsmen in Putrajaya yesterday, Dr Mahathir said candidates vying for the posts of Umno vice president, head and deputy head of Wanita Umno and deputy head of Umno Youth have pledged to cease campaigning for the election.

Dr Mahathir said the candidates also agreed to curb money politics and ensure that the contest for the posts takes place in a healthy family spirit.

The candidates reached the agreement at a meeting with Dr Mahathir on Monday night.

He said the measures were proposed by the candidates themselves. All the candidates also signed an acknowledgement letter on the agreement.

"For the sake of safeguarding the interest of the party, religion and country, they have agreed and given their undertaking not to proceed with their campaigning in whatever form," he said.

Dr Mahathir said their agreement to stop any form of campaigning included whatever campaigns conducted by their supporters, representatives or agents, whether directly or indirectly.

The candidates will not contact the delegates or allow the delegates to contact them in any manner including visiting them at home, through the telephone, facsimile and other channels.

"I will also meet with candidates vying for the supreme council post soon and try to coax them into making a similar pledge," he said.

On ways to ensure that the candidates and delegates would not campaign and resort to money politics, Dr Mahathir said they will be monitored by certain groups of people whose identities will not be compromised.

He also sought the cooperation from the press not to write analytical pieces on supposed merits and demerits of the candidates vying for the top posts in Umno.

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