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Ensuring members have adequate information to counter lies

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Umno faces difficulties in countering lies and rumours about the party and its leaders as members do not have adequate information, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

To arrest this problem, he said, briefing sessions for leaders and members would be held so that they would be able to counter such lies.

"For example, when I was overseas, there were rumours that I fell (while horseriding), that I was very ill and the like.

"When asked, Umno members and leaders found it difficult to answer because they were not getting the correct information," he said.

The Prime Minister was speaking after chairing a four-hour meeting of the party supreme council at Menara Dato' Onn.

Dr Mahathir said there were also many wild stories being spread against Umno like alleged corruption involving members and misuse of government funds for mega projects.

Dr Mahathir said the party would provide accurate information to members so that they could explain to the public.

On party matters, vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is carrying out the duties of deputy president, said the council had endorsed the recommendation of the disciplinary committee that 35 members be sacked for going against the party in the last general election.

Another 386 members have been asked to show cause why action should not be taken against them.

Abdullah, who chairs the committee, said the council had also decided that divisions and branches were empowered to ban certain members from attending meetings.

But this only applied to those who have "clear-cut" cases.

"For example, in cases where a member was a candidate for the Opposition, had left the party, or sponsored the formation of Opposition party branches, the member can be regarded as already sacked and cannot attend meetings," said Abdullah.

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