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Go back, return only on May 9, PM tells delegates

Kamarul Yunus

DELEGATES to the Umno general assembly are advised not to linger around Kuala Lumpur until the meeting starts next week to avoid suspicion that they may resort to money politics, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"If they (delegates) are found to be in the city and there are proof that they indulged in money politics, we may strip them of their status as delegates to the assembly.

"I was informed that there are still several delegates, referred to as the G-7 group, staying in hotels in Kuala Lumpur. My advice to them is to go home and come back on May 9," he told newsmen after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The "G-7" refers to the seven delegates elected by each division, apart from the five division office-bearers who are automatic delegates.

The five are the division chief, deputy chief, vice-head, youth and wanita chiefs.

On whether there are candidates for Umno top posts who have breached the pledge not to campaign, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said most of them are supportive of the move not to campaign although there are some who oppose the no-contest suggestion.

"Certain quarters oppose the no-contest suggestion because this would jeopardise their chance to gain something from the candidates," he said.

Dr Mahathir added that the pledge taken by candidates for the post of vice president, wanita chief and deputy chief, and youth deputy chief seems to be the effective way to curb money politics thus far.

On allegations that two candidates for the deputy youth chief post had used money to secure votes from the delegates, Dr Mahathir said there was no evidence to show that they (candidates) were involved in such an unhealthy activity.

"Both candidates had replied to the Umno technical committee, and it that there was no case against them," he said.

The two candidates who were alleged to be involved in money politics are Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir and the only contender for the same post, Encik Zein Isma Ismail.

Dr Mahathir also said the council rejected the appeal by Umno Bandar Tun Razak division to approve the nominations for its delegates to the assembly.

"This suspension also applied to its wanita and youth movement although their respective meetings were held accordingly," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the council also agreed to accept Datuk Harun Idris as an Umno member provided the latter submits his application to the party.

On the Umno general assembly, scheduled for May 10-13, Dr Mahathir said the preparations for the event are proceeding smoothly.

He said three proposals, namely the presidential speech, religion and economics will be presented during the party's assembly.

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