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Tough choice for delegates

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DELEGATES at the Umno assembly had a tough time selecting the best candidates for the new vice-president line-up, especially after the strong advice made by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to reject leaders who practised money politics.

Addressing the assembly, Dr Mahathir reminded delegates to choose leaders on the basis of their ability to contribute to the party, religion and race, and not in the hope of getting material gains.

Dr Mahathir took great pains to explain to delegates the need for credible and clean leaders as failure to do this would damage the party.

Voting for the posts of deputy permanent chairman, three vice-presidents and 25 supreme council members went on smoothly after the presidential speech, although it was one hour behind schedule.

The supreme council had appointed an election committee to improve transparency, headed by Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin Yassin, who briefed delegates on the voting process before they cast their votes.

Among others, he reminded them to vote the exact number of candidates for the posts of vice-president and supreme council members.

Delegates also must personally cast their votes. Proxy voting is not allowed.

When balloting started at 1.30pm, it was Dr Mahathir who cast his vote first, followed by deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the three vice-presidents, supreme council members and, finally, the delegates.

Delegates collected their ballot papers and cast their votes at the 130 voting booths.

The last ballot paper was handed over at 3.40pm.

Security throughout polling was tight and once balloting was over the ballot boxes were brought into counting room.

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