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Umno delegates advised to go home and come back on May 9

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed Umno delegates who have started converging here to go back to their home States and only return on May 9, one day before the party general assembly starts.

The party president warned those who were here to try to solicit money from candidates that they would be disqualified if evidence could be adduced against them.

"I was informed that quite a number of delegates, known as the G7, are already staying in hotels here.

"My advice to them ... go back and return here on May 9," Dr Mahathir said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting today.

The term "G7" is used to describe seven of the 12 delegates representing each of the 165 divisions in the country who were elected to attend the Umno general assembly.

The remaining five are described as the "G5" and automatically become delegates by virtue of their posts in the division.

They are the division's chief, deputy chief, vice-chief, Youth and Wanita chiefs. Umno will hold its general assembly from May 10 to 13.

Dr Mahathir said if there were evidence that delegates were involved in money politics they would be deemed unfit to exercise their rights as delegates.

On April 25, after witnessing 15 candidates bidding for senior party posts sign a pledge to stem money politics, Dr Mahathir had said there were about 600 delegates in Kuala Lumpur meeting with "this and that person". He said he also knew some MPs were so caught up with campaigning that they skipped the Dewan Rakyat sittings.

Dr Mahathir had said party leaders were aware of delegates to the assembly going round with candidates, hoping to get something for themselves. Speaking to the Press today, he said the supreme council discussed putting a stop to money politics and had decided to "combat it to the end".

"We want members to work towards creating the culture to serve," he added.

Asked if the supreme council intended to introduce any more measures to curb money politics, Dr Mahathir said: "As it is, the measures we have introduced seem to be quite effective."

He said when the supreme council issued the no contest advice for the posts of president and deputy president, the members accepted it.

"There are certain quarters who condemned the no contest advice.

"They are against the advice because without contest, there will be no opportunities (of material gains) for them."

He said the supreme council also discussed the preparations for the general assembly and was satisfied with it, and a rehearsal would be held soon to ensure the party election go on smoothly.

The Umno president said the supreme council also discussed extensively the role of the party and its struggle for Islam.

"We believe there should be no doubt within the supreme council and among other members of Umno's struggle for Islam," he said.

It also agreed on the establishment of Barisan Nasional Clubs abroad.

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