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`Heed call to eradicate money politics'

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said party members should heed the party president's reminder that action will be taken against those who breached party ethics and regulations meant to safeguard the future of Umno.

He said members need to accept the outcome of the crackdown on money politics to ensure the party continues to be led by leaders who were respected and fully supported by all.

"He (Dr Mahathir) is actually playing the role of a father who is telling his children to clean up the house, so that they may lead a healthy lifestyle."

Kedah Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said Dr Mahathir's call should serve as a wake-up call particularly for those in states facing the direct onslaught of the Opposition.

Kedah Umno realised that it is facing one of the biggest challenge to contain the spread of Pas' influence in the State and the president's reminder would serve as a stimulant to their efforts to close rank and work together for the party's future.

"I honestly believe that we in Kedah are moving in the right direction as far as the president's speech is concerned, and I think the same goes for the other states."

Penang Wanita Umno head Saripah Aminah Syed Mohamad said Dr Mahathir's advice to the delegates was a "final call" for them to address the issue of money politics.

"Dr Mahathir has tried all methods he could including pleading and crying to the delegates. We must stop this habit immediately."

Wanita Umno executive council member Dr Noraessah Mohamad said money politics exists in the movement although not very rampant.

"There are such cases but it is not worth talking about."

"It depends on the individual ... whether you regard the giving of silk batiks as a part of money politics or merely as a buah tangan."

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said they should respect and accept the decision faithfully.

"The threats by some leaders to take the matter to court should not arise."

"If they are really Umno members, they should not be doing this. Such action is unwise and will only put Umno at stake."

The problem should be addressed through the proper channel.

Terengganu Umno deputy chief Datuk Idris Jusoh said the time had come for leaders and members to cleanse Umno of money politics.

"Umno members should be committed in their effort to eradicate the party of money politics to ensure that Umno will remain relevant in its fight."

Datuk Dr Rais Yatim, who is Jelebu Umno divisional chief, said Umno members should embark on the move as the first step to clean up the party.

Wanita Umno Chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said though there had been no reports of money politics among the members to date, there must be some strain of it in the movement.

"However, it has not reached a worrying stage and to date, we have received no report of it among the Wanita Umno members," she said.

She said that although the situation is under control at the moment, there is always fear that it may creep into the movement.

"No amount of money can displace patriotism and I urge all Wanita Umno

members to take immediate measures to ensure money politics is eliminated completely," she said.

On the briefing by Dr Mahathir, she said it was clear that there had been plenty of changes in Umno over the last few years, especially in regard to the fighting spirit of the members.

No matter what happened, the members must continue to place party above self and work relentlessly to strenghten Umno.

"We must take steps immediately to strenghten the party.

"Otherwise, what would be left of Umno for our future generation would only be the skeleton of Umno and nothing more," she said.

Wanita Umno has taken various steps to initiate immediate programmes towards this effort.

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