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Security to be beefed up at Umno assembly

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Security will be stepped up to ensure that no untoward incidents occur at the 56th Umno Annual General Assembly - the largest assembly so far - which begins on Thursday.

Putra World Trade Centre chief executive officer Datuk Yaakob Mohammad said there will be about 500 security personnel, including in-house security and police officers and men. Some will be plainclothes.

"We do not want any shoes to be stolen or any bags to go missing. We want it to be smooth and systematic," he said.

Yaakob said some of the party members were liable to get over-excited when they see Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"They love him too much", he said when briefing reporters on the PWTC's preparations for the three-day event which will be preceded by the assemblies of the party's Youth and Wanita wings and the Puteri wing's convention.

All three will be opened tomorrow night by party deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The assembly is expected to attract 10,000 people, including 2,033 party delegates and representatives from 12 political parties from other countries.

Yaakob said the preparations which started three months ago and which involved 600 staff members, were also concerned with ensuring there were enough seats for division observers attending the assembly.

"There won't be enough seats in the Dewan Merdeka for the observers, since this is the largest assembly so far. We are putting up screens in the Dewan Tun Hussein and Tun Razak for them."

Another feature of the assembly will be the 230 stalls in the PWTC lobby for members to ply their wares.

Yaakob said 100,000 meals will be prepared over the five-day period to make it easy for delegates to eat in and around the PTWC.

"Last time, we charged RM40 per head for the buffet and most of the delegates were eating outside. This time, we are only charging RM20 so that members won't have to go outside to eat."

Japanese cuisine would also be prepared since "the President likes Japanese food", said a PWTC official who did not want to be named.

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