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## Bigger and better Umno general assembly this year

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - This year's Umno general assembly, to be held in Putra World Trade Centre here, will be "bigger and better" given the increased number of delegates, supporters, retailers and observers.

A highlight will be the specially-designed backdrop for the stage in Merdeka Hall where the proceedings will take place, said PWTC chief executive officer Datuk Yaakob Mohammad today.

He revealed that the 95 feet by 20 feet backdrop was designed by PWTC staff, who were now working to incorporate suggestions by Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to improve it.

About four per cent of the work remained to be done, said Yaakob.

He said the increase in the number of delegates to 2,248 from 2,033 last year was attributed to the fact that Puteri Umno was now an official Umno movement.

Even the number of foreign political parties invited to attend the proceedings had increased, from 12 last year to 18.

There will be 480 stalls at the bazaar, up from last year's 230.

Yaakob said particular focus will be given to cleanliness this time around. This was because the PWTC expects a whopping number of delegates and supporters to catch Dr Mahathir amanat (message).

For their convenience there would be 36 washrooms, with a total of 300 toilet cubicles, throughout the centre.

Yaakob was speaking at a Press conference after giving a one-hour tour of the preparations for the 54th party general assembly.

A 65-member housekeeping team would continuously monitor cleanliness of the PWTC, with 36 staff stationed in toilets from 7am to 10pm.

"We've even ordered 3,500 jumbo tissue rolls and 5,800 plastic garbage bags because we expect 44 tones of rubbish a day."

Yaakob said there would be a total of 90,000 meals prepared by PWTC chefs from June 17 to June 21 inclusive of breakfast, lunch, tea break and dinner.

He said the biggest event involving food would be the party president's dinner on Thursday at Tun Razak Hall 1, followed by the deputy president's dinner on Friday at the same venue.

Even the bazaar booths have been upgraded, with special booths for each retailer instead of the usual tables.

Yaakob said that the booths were carpeted and equipped with tables, chairs and even wireless broadband connection so that participants could hook up to the Internet.

"There was overwhelming request for booth space - nearly 1,000 interested retailers, but we could only accommodate 480 booths."

Yaakob also said there was a new programme event this year: Dr Mahathir would conduct a live web conference with students from various Umno clubs worldwide.

The event would be hosted by Interactive Channel Sdn Bhd, which is developing the Umno Club Overseas website. It will be officially launched by Dr Mahathir on Thursday before the web conference.