

Ma must 'face the people's misery,' demonstrators say

Written by Taipei Times

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A group of National Taiwan University students stage a protest at the university against President Ma Ying-jeou and other key officials yesterday. □

Photo: CNA

In the wake of the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) decision to postpone its party congress that was scheduled for Sunday due to protests planned against President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), a group of protesters from labor unions and civic groups yesterday protested outside the KMT headquarters, accusing Ma of evading public discontent and urging the party to address political strife.

Shouting: "Face the misery of the people, Ma Ying-jeou. Four KMT star politicians, stop blurring the line between right and wrong," the protesters accused Ma and Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) of worsening living conditions for the public amid their political rift, and urged Ma's possible successors — Vice President Wu Den-yih (吳登益), Premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華), New Taipei City (新北市) Mayor Eric Chu (朱立倫) and Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin (郝龍斌) — to resolve the issue for the sake of their own political futures.

"The KMT and these political stars should stop the so-called 'Respecting Wang and supporting Ma' approach and start addressing the issue. If they do not separate themselves from Ma and the political rift until next year's local election, it will be too late," National Alliance for Workers of Closed Factories representative Wu Yong-yi (吳永毅) said.

The alliance will continue to organize anti-Ma rallies, with at least 45 civic groups participating, despite the KMT's decision to delay the party congress to next month or November, he said.

"We don't care when or where the KMT's congress will be held. The protests will go on, and we

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will follow Ma and the KMT wherever they go," he said.

Yesterday's protest was held in response to the KMT's announcement on Tuesday that it has decided to delay its 19th party congress, which was to begin on Sunday at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, due to civic groups' plans to hold a rally against Ma there that day.

The party is considering holding the congress at Chungshan Hall on Yangmingshan on Oct. 26, but no plans have been confirmed for the new date and venue.

Ma was unaffected by the protest yesterday as he presided over the KMT's Central Standing Committee in the building. Dozens of police officers were dispatched to the KMT headquarters to prevent the protesters, of which there were about 20, from entering the building.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Taipei City Councilor Chien Yu-yen (陳玉賢) accused Taipei's police department of "wasting its manpower" protecting Ma, urging the department not to become bodyguards for the president.

She said the KMT has tightened security at the party headquarters since July as more groups took their protests to the venue at the weekly Central Standing committee, and the department sent more than 140 police to the scene at a protest in July.

Hau shrugged off Chien's accusations, saying police were dispatched in accordance with the size of rallies and protests, as well as protocols regarding the protection of the president and government officials.

Students held a separate protest on the grounds of National Taiwan University yesterday.

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