

Dr M: Why would-be members must be properly screened

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Umno members that Opposition members could infiltrate the party and create chaos if there was no proper screening of new members at grassroots level.

"We do not know the intentions and objectives of new members or would-be members. They might have different motives for joining the party.

"When the speeches of cassettes of Ustaz Abdul Hadi Awang could be sold at the Umno complex during the general assembly, this form of infiltration can also happen," he told delegates.

The Prime Minister was speaking after a few branch leaders had objected to amendments to the party's constitution which empower only divisions to approve the membership of those wishing to join at branch levels.

Dr Mahathir said if there was no control over the recruitment of members, Opposition members forming an Umno branch could cause chaos and problems for the Government.

He said there had been incidents in certain States where a number of mosques and imams appointed by the Government had been taken over or influenced by people through subtle means.

"These mosques, built by the Government, are now being controlled by people who oppose us.

"Once this happens, it is very difficult for us to regain control of these places," he said.

"We do not have any selfish interests in proposing these amendments other than to safeguard our party."