

Dr M: Debate on Rulers should be open

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Debate on a resolution on the constitutional monarchy at the Umno general assembly should be open, party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"I feel this resolution should be debated openly as long as it does not violate the law," said the Prime Minister.

However, he added the party would carefully study the phrasing of the resolution in view of the sensitive nature of the subject.

A special meeting will be convened for this purpose, Dr Mahathir told newsmen after a closed-door meeting with divisional heads, secretaries, Youth and Wanita chiefs at Umno headquarters at Putra World Trade Centre.

He said the party had to be careful with the wording of the resolution as it had to take into consideration the law on sedition.

"According to the Sedition Act, the Government cannot be criticised because anyone who runs

down the Government or who caused hatred among the people for the Government is committing an offence and action can be taken.

"But we allow a lot of criticism against the Government because it is most important the people voice their views.

Criticism

"If we do not criticise an institution where deviations have occurred, these deviations may continue and the situation may get worse."

The Prime Minister said such criticism should be allowed as long as it is done through the proper channels and followed the proper traditions.

"For me, it is all right."

The Jelutong Umno division will table the resolution while a Negri Sembilan division will endorse it.

While the resolution has received the support of Umno divisions, there is disagreement on whether it should be discussed openly or behind closed doors.

On the party elections, Dr Mahathir said he wanted to see an orderly and disciplined campaign.

He reiterated that party unity be given importance and winners and losers should accept the outcome.

He said that, so far, there had been "a little" unhealthy campaigning being conducted by the candidates.

"There are some using

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Dr Mahathir: Points are not bonus system

★ FROM PAGE ONE

books, flying letters or holding too many meetings in their campaign. In my talks with them, I did not expose anyone. I only made general comments.

"I called on the candidates to minimise such campaign, if not to stop it altogether."

On a suggestion that the present practice of allotting 10 votes for each person nominated by a division for the president and deputy president's post be dropped, he said it was not right to call them "bonus" votes.

"This term is used by enemies of Umno," he said, adding that this voting system was adopted because delegates sometimes did not bother about the division's views.

"We found in 1987 many delegates sold their votes. I was nominated by more than 80 divisions but when the delegates arrived, their votes were bought.

"That is why the votes did not reflect the nomin-

ations.
"With this system, it's difficult for anyone to buy over the division."

He agreed with a suggestion that Youth and Wanita chiefs be elected rather than appointed as it is now.

However, he said, this provision was made to prevent struggles in the two movements.

"Maybe in the next party election (in 1993), we can allow contests for the two posts."

On a report that Kelantan Menteri Besar Haji Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat had invited him to an audience with the Sultan of Kelantan and to visit the State, he said it was difficult to entertain invitations made through the Press.

He said Haji Nik Abdul Aziz should send an official invitation if he was serious with the proposal.

He added that he would consider such an invitation if it was sent to him officially.