

Dr M explains reasons for debate on monarchy

NOV 3 1990

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Umno has the right to question any attempt by anyone who threatens to violate the law or spirit pertaining to the country's system of constitutional monarchy, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

This, the Umno president said, was the underlying philosophy for the move to table the resolution on constitutional monarchy at the party's general assembly which begins its three-day deliberations here tomorrow.

The resolution was never intended to change the existing system of constitutional monarchy or parliamentary democracy, Dr Mahathir told reporters after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

The Prime Minister was

asked by reporters to comment on the tabling of the resolution at the assembly, and what guidelines delegates would observe to debate on the resolution.

The resolution will be tabled on Saturday by the Youth wing of the party.

Dr Mahathir said Umno would not violate any law on the matter. In any case, the law did not prevent the party from questioning anything that was inconsistent with the country's Constitution.

At the meeting, the council endorsed the credentials of 1,519 delegates who qualified to attend the assembly. The suspended Pasir Mas branch will only send observers.

The 1,519 delegates comprise members of the supreme council, 30 representatives each from the Youth and Wanita wings and delegates selected by the party's divisions. All

have the right to vote in the elections for vice-presidents and supreme council members.

The election results will be announced immediately after counting is over, "even if it's at 3am," Dr Mahathir said. Voting will start about 2.45pm.

"It's just like the general election," he quipped.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat told reporters that the 1,519 delegates were thoroughly screened to weed out bankrupts and Group A Government officers who were disqualified from taking part in the assembly as delegates.

They could attend the assembly as observers, he added.

"This is a clean list," Datuk Mohamed said.

Asked about Umno's role in the Sipitang and Sulabayan by-elections in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said the

party would help the Barisan Nasional campaign by sending deputy president Abdul Ghafar Baba there for four days from Dec 4.

The by-elections for both State seats will be on Dec 8.

Umno will also send a 30-member team to Sabah headed by information chief Datuk Haji Hussein Ahmad who will set up a secretariat and an election operations room as part of Umno's plans to expand to Sabah.

Asked about Malaysia's stand on the United States resolution to seek the United Nations endorsement for military intervention in the Gulf crisis, Dr Mahathir said he might make an announcement on the matter tomorrow.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, who is in New York, is expected to brief the Prime Minister on the latest developments tomorrow.