

# Umno to sue if Mustapha is dropped

By Jasni Rahim

UMNO will sue Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) if Tun Haji Mustapha Datu Harun is dropped from the Sabah Legislative Assembly for leaving Usno to join Umno.

Umno president Datu Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday as a State Assemblyman, Tun Haji Mustapha is not violating any of the laws of the Sabah Government by his intention to join Umno.

"Tun Haji Mustapha contested under the Barisan National banner and not under Usno in the last general election," he said. "So, strictly speaking, he has never violated the laws which the PBS recently introduced in the State."

The Sabah Government had made a ruling that State Assemblymen will be automatically dropped from the State Legislative Assembly if they quit the party which they had represented at elections.

Speaking to reporters after chairing an Umno Supreme Council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre at Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Dr Mahathir also said Umno will consider proposals for the party's long-term programme.

He said this is in line with the country's hopes and aspirations to become a developed country by the year 2020.

The Prime Minister said the future roles and contributions of Umno in the country's socio-economic development were one of the main issues discussed at length during the Supreme Council meeting.

He said it is vital for Umno to remain a strong and stable political party. Umno, he added, has a special role in determining the success of achieving this goal.

"We will initiate and consider any programmes which we should undertake immediately to ensure Umno can become an even stronger party politically.

"What is important to us is that we want to see Umno as a more stable party," he said. This is because Umno's political stability determines the national political stability and progress directly.

On Umno's development in Sabah, the Prime Minister said he is glad with the response the Sabahans have shown following Umno's entry into the State.

"We will accept applications from anyone in the State even those from other parties if they are interested

in becoming Umno members," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno leaders had discussed with Tun Haji Mustapha the setting up of the Umno branches throughout the State.

"We have appointed 14 Usno and six non-Usno leaders to coordinate the formation of the Umno divisional protem committees in Sabah," he added.

On the apology by Far Eastern Economic Review Ltd of Hong Kong which had earlier published an article on a purported attempt to sell Limbang in Sarawak to Brunei, he said:

"We are happy because we have achieved the objective of proving that the reports were baseless. We just need that ... we don't look for the compensation money."

On the resolutions on constitutional monarchy which Umno submitted to the Rulers after the last Umno general assembly, he said Umno has received positive feedback from the Rulers.

"Our Rulers have understood the contents of the resolutions and have since accepted them well."

Asked about the development in Iraq of rebels fighting against the leadership of President Saddam Hussein, Dr Mahathir expressed concern about developments in the war-torn country.

The Prime Minister hopes the Iraqi Government will be cautious in its actions.

"The Iraqi Government has to be cautious so that no more Iraqi people are killed. However, it is not our intention here to interfere in their State affairs," he said.