

Request for third Bumi congress

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. Umno will request the Government to hold the third Bumiputera Economic Congress in December to discuss inputs aimed at generating quality Bumiputera participation in national development.

Its president, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said the party feels the inputs are necessary to reflect the stress on quality Bumiputera economic involvement as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).

Umno will make the request to the Government to organise the congress because the Government is responsible for the implementation of various development programmes.

Dr Mahathir, who is party's supreme council strongly felt that there should be more emphasis on quality Bumiputera participation rather than quantity.

Speaking to newsmen after a council meeting here

today, Dr Mahathir said the proposed congress could look into various aspects of the implementation of the NDP.

At today's meeting, council members also agreed in principle to amend the party constitution to allow for the appointments of three additional supreme council members from the current seven.

They also agreed to allow the Wanita and Youth wing chiefs and deputy chiefs be elected rather than appointed as is practised now. They would then automatically become vice-presidents.

A special general assembly will be held on Nov 8 to deliberate on the proposed constitutional amendments. The assembly will also discuss a proposal to amend the constitution

to allow states that failed to obtain independence at the branch and divisional levels to appeal directly to the Supreme Council.

Dr Mahathir said the council also approved the applications by MP for Machang, Encik Ahmad no Shukri Haji Hassan, and the former Kelantan Semangat 46 secretary Encik Kassim

Mohamed, to join the party.

"We also accepted the membership of 2,767 former Semangat 46 members from Pasir Mas," he said.

On the defeat by the Barisan Nasional candidates in the Limbongan and Sungai Pinang Kelantan State by-elections last week, Dr Mahathir said generally the ruling coalition was happy with its performance.

"We have identified our weaknesses. With greater effort, we are confident of winning future elections in the State," he said.

Asked to comment on the request by certain quarters in Sabah for a referendum to decide whether Sabah should secede from Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said the question of secession did not arise at all.

He said: "The Constitution states that no state in the country can secede from the Federation. Therefore, such a referendum would only violate the laws of the country."

Earlier, Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun, who is Umphang, Encik Ahmad no's deputy liaison chief in Sabah, was sworn in as an Umno supreme council member.