

Mahathir: Govt to study resolutions

By ZULKIFLI ALWI

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THE Federal and State Governments are studying the resolutions passed by the just-concluded Third Bumi-putera Economic Congress. Resolutions deemed suitable will be implemented, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"The (Umno) Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers have agreed to analyse the resolutions for possible implementation," he told reporters after chairing an Umno Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The three-day congress adopted more than 35 resolutions, including the proposal to set up another trust fund along the lines of Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB).

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is the Umno president, also said that the Government is studying the call by Umno Youth asking the Government to blacklist legal firms which are anti-Government.

"While we are not forcing lawyers to support the Government, we also do not want to give them a lot of money

which may later be used for anti-Government activities such as those organised by the Bar Council," he said.

The Bar Council, he added, is using foreign pressure on the Government through non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) which appear to be acting as the new colonisers. "The Bar Council is disappointed that Malaysia is an independent nation, and thus they are bringing in new colonial powers."

On the redevelopment of Kampung Baru in Kuala Lumpur, the Prime Minister clarified that the Government has not allocated any budget to compensate land owners for land to be acquired.

"We have just started surveying the land and we do not know how much compensation to give. Of course, we will not rob the owners of their land."

He stressed that what is more important is that Kampung Baru is developed for the benefit of the Malays. "We will build shoplots which are affordable to the Malays," he said, adding

that otherwise the exercise will be pointless.

He also said the Government is compiling feedback from the public on the idea of making prisoners pay for their upkeep and alternative penalties for jail sentences.

"Crimes are committed against society. When offenders are imprisoned, society has to bear the burden of paying for their upkeep. This is wrong as society is being penalised," he said.

Thus, the Government is looking at alternatives such as suspended sentences, he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Umno deputy president Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba disclosed that the party's branch elections in Sabah will be held from February 21 to 29. It will be followed by divisional elections on March 1.

"With the divisional elections, the pro-tem committees at branch and divisional levels will be dissolved," said Encik Ghafar who is the chairman of Sabah Umno's pro-tem committee. — By Zulkifli Alwi