

24 OCT 1999

Khalil-candidates

UMNO PRESIDENT HASN'T ASKED FOR CANDIDATE LIST, SAYS SEC-GEN

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has not asked for the list of candidates for the general election from state liaison chiefs, said party's secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

"Not that I know of, not yet," he said, responding to questions from reporters after officiating the Information Ministry's Family Day at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa, here today.

But Khalil, who is Information Minister, said the names of potential candidates would usually be announced on the eve of the nomination day.

If the names were released much earlier, some quarters such as supporters of those not nominated as candidates might be less enthusiastic, he said.

"This is the best way as the president himself has frequently stressed that the focus is on the party. It's the party that will be contesting, party's symbol will be used and for Umno, we will announce the candidates at the last minute," he said.

Asked whether Umno headquarters had received the candidate list, he said the party's president would usually ask state liaison chiefs to submit proposal but the final decision would be his.

He said the president also had ways of identifying potential candidates and those who should be retained.

Khalil also did not dismiss the possibility that some quarters might try to promote certain individuals as potential candidates.

"We would take note of such things as at times it could be important. But this is not the official directive," he said.

On report that the opposition would issue their manifesto today, he said they could as they had been campaigning for quite sometime.

"But for Umno, we have our own work schedule," he said.

-- BERNAMA

mny abg