

30 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Umno

DON'T GIVE PROBLEMS IF NOT NOMINATED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

BAHAU, March 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised Umno members who did not receive enough nominations to contest in division elections next month not to create problems for the party.

"(If) We are not nominated, so we cannot become candidates. By right, if we are not nominated, we should not create problems," he told reporters after a closed-door meeting with the Jempol and Jelebu Umno divisions in Bandar Baru Serting near here.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said this when commenting on Beserah state assemblyman Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman's intention to give up his seat.

Yesterday, Fauzi, 55, said he decided to resign as Beserah state assemblyman because the majority of Umno branches in Beserah did not nominate him to defend the post of Kuantan division chief in next month's elections.

According to the Kuantan Umno division office, Fauzi has received only nine nominations so far compared to division vice-chief Datuk Faisal Abdullah's 29 and division deputy chief Datuk Wan Adnan Wan Mamat's 20.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said he had not received a copy of the police report which Fauzi lodged against Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

Asked what action Umno would take following Fauzi's move, he said: "We have to see the basis of the police report, whether there is basis or not."

He said Umno would only tackle problems in the party and would not get involved in matters outside the party.

The prime minister said he had been informed by Khalil on all the actions taken by Fauzi.

Two days ago, Fauzi lodged the report on alleged irregularities in the management of state resources in Pahang when Khalil was the Menteri Besar.

Asked how the report would affect the position of Khalil, who is Information Minister, he said: "Nothing...it's normal."

To a question on whether these developments would affect Umno's position, he said: "We have to see; in this case he sees that he has no support and so he is disappointed."

Asked for his view on Fauzi's intention to resign as Beserah assemblyman, the prime minister said he would think about it after receiving the resignation letter.

On the issue of PAS deputy president Haji Abdul Hadi Awang's so-called "amanat" (message), Dr Mahathir said the government would study carefully the relevant laws under which it could take action.

Asked whether action would be taken against PAS or Abdul Hadi, he said: "This matter is also being studied."

Abdul Hadi's so-called message is said to have led to PAS supporters labelling Umno members as infidels and caused a split in the community.

Dr Mahathir said his visit to Negeri Sembilan today was to enable him to explain current issues to Umno leaders and to stress to Umno members the importance of strengthening the party.

"It is also aimed at thoroughly explaining the problems faced by the country now, including those connected to the decree issued recently, its meaning and what the government can do," he said.

He was referring to the decree made by the Conference of Rulers

recently on the use of the word Islam in the names of organisations including political parties, and the act of calling fellow Muslims infidels.

-- BERNAMA

APG AFY MAM YBY