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Extremist group in Pas being monitored, says Dr M

GENTING HIGHLANDS, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the Government was monitoring the activities of an "extremist group" within Pas.

"We are aware of this development and are now monitoring the situation," said the Prime Minister when asked by reporters after the opening of the first National Education Convention at Institut Aminuddin Baki, whether he was aware of the existence of a group calling themselves Pemuda Jihad within Pas.

Dr Mahathir said once it was detected that the group was "going overboard", immediate action would be taken.

On government officers taking part in active politics, Dr Mahathir said the Government would only allow those who did not have a conflict of interest to do so.

"These officers can seek permission to take part in politics. It will then be up to the Government to approve it."

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the election of Bank Negara Assistant Governor (Operations and Investment) Datuk Dr Awang Adek Husin as Bachok Umno division deputy chairman.

The Umno special general assembly last year had allowed Group A government officers to contest and hold posts in the party.

Asked about the General Orders - which prohibits superscale officers and those in the professional group from actively participating in politics - Dr Mahathir said the Government had no problems with it.

"This is because there have been officers taking up politics in the past.

"We do not give permission randomly. What will happen if the division head is an office boy and he has to work under a district officer? So we have to be careful."

On the thrust of the Eighth Malaysia Plan to be tabled in Parliament on Monday, Dr Mahathir said: "It (the contents) is mostly what's in the Third Outline Perspective Plan."

Pressed to furnish details, he said: "You will have to wait."

Asked about the role of his two special economic advisers - Tan Sri Ali Abul Hassan Sulaiman and Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop - Dr Mahathir said they were there to advise him on many matters.

"Many things are brought to my attention and final decisions sought but in order to do this (come to a decision), I have to study the matter first.

"Therefore, I need them (the advisers) to advise me. But I still have to make my decision. Whether I accept their decision, it's my responsibility."

He said the advisers also monitored privatisation projects.

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