

23 APR 2001

Mahathir-Umno

PLAN TO BAR WEALTHY MEMBERS FROM CONTEST IS MY PERSONAL OPINION: DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the proposal to prevent the very rich from contesting for posts in Umno was his personal opinion.

The Prime Minister said the matter would be referred to the Umno Supreme Council meeting.

"This is my view, it has not been approved by the Supreme Council yet, I hope the Council will agree to it," he told reporters after tabling the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) at the Dewan Rakyat today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said the proposal was general in nature and not meant to block extremely rich people from joining Umno.

"(They) can join Umno, but (they) need not contest, they need not become division chief and we will ascertain that those who are truly sincere will not be prevented from contesting just because they are rich," he said.

On Saturday, when opening the Kubang Pasu Umno delegates meeting, Dr Mahathir had said that the extremely wealthy group would not be allowed to contest key posts in Umno whether at the branch or Supreme Council level.

He said the move was aimed at curbing money politics in the party.

On the proposal, the Prime Minister said the extremely rich Umno members would be asked to make a statement on their assets.

"I have stated that they would have to declare their assets just like the ministers who have to declare their assets.

"If their wealth suddenly shrink during the election, we want to know why," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MS HS AO