

Umno wants polls violence checked

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno will file a complaint with the government on the violence committed by opposition parties, especially PAS, during the recent Pendang and Anak Bukit by-elections.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there is a trend towards violent behaviour during elections and therefore, the government must try to control the situation.

"I am worried that if PAS supporters have started to ignore the police, to the extent of hijacking buses and pre-

venting people (from voting) and all, one day the police will have to use force and maybe they have to fire shots or whatever.

"If something bad happens, we will see damage that will tarnish the image of the country. That's why we want to determine from now how to curb this violence," he told a press conference at party headquarters.

Speaking after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting, Mahathir said Umno's defeat in Anak Bukit and its small margin in victory in Pendang were due to PAS violence.

He said Umno is satisfied with Barisan Nasional's per-

formance as in almost all ballot boxes, the number of votes for BN had increased.

"This means many of the people there have returned to supporting Umno. But, we could not win because of PAS's hostility," he said, citing incidents where PAS supporters had carried weapons such as parangs and threatened to boycott or harm people who vote for the ruling party.

In Anak Bukit, he said, about 600 Chinese could not come out to vote and there were also some Umno members, from both areas, who were afraid to vote.

Umno also has identified 1,000 voters who had admitted to switching to vote in areas

which they thought PAS could win, he added.

Asked how soon the government can initiate action against the Opposition, he said as soon as possible, adding that Umno has all the relevant materials, including brochures and pictures, to support its claims.

In another development, Mahathir said the cabinet meeting earlier yesterday did not discuss the issue of teaching mathematics and science in English.

"There was also no decision yet on whether Tamil and Chinese schools will have to follow suit but we think they will also do the same," he added.