

# Govt to stop violence by political parties

STAR 25 JUL 2002  
By SA'ODAH ELIAS

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will look into ways to check the use of violence and intimidation by political parties in future elections.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the matter would be given priority and measures to stop this trend would be introduced as soon as possible.

Singling out PAS, the Prime Minister added: "We need to do this because the trend towards using violence and intimidation by PAS is getting out of hand.

"I am worried that if PAS supporters start ignoring police and are willing to detain buses and detain people . . . one day the police will have to use force, will have to fire shots.

"Then, if something happens, we will see riots that will tarnish our image. That's why we should, at the very outset, ensure that such violent behaviour is nipped in the bud,"

he said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said there was enough evidence on the acts of violence perpetrated by PAS supporters during the recent Anak Bukit and Pengang by-elections to enable the Government to act.

However, Dr Mahathir said Umno was satisfied with the outcome of the by-elections despite failing to secure the Anak Bukit state seat.

"Overall, the number of votes that we received from all ballot boxes in both constituencies has increased."

In another development, Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the election for the national-level office bearers of Puteri Umno to replace the current pro-tern committee would be held on Nov 2.

He said the election would be preceded by the branch and division-level election, which would start from Aug 1.