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Dr M: It's as good as cheating (HL)

Abdul Razak Ahmad; Alina Simon

KUALA NERANG, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned Barisan Nasional election candidates against concealing their assets by transferring ownership to someone else.

He said action would be taken against them if they did and were found out.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, described candidates' attempts to conceal their assets as a form of cheating.

He said cheating could happen if a suggestion to make it compulsory for candidates to declare their assets was implemented.

"It may happen, and if we find out later that the candidate has cheated us, then we will take action," he said after inspecting progress work on the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine border complex at Durian Burung, here.

The Prime Minister, who is also Umno president, had been asked if he agreed that dishonest candidates could still conceal their assets by transferring ownership, for example, to family members.

The suggestion arose from concern that wealthy BN State Assemblymen who showed off their opulent lifestyles could jeopardise the coalition's chances in the general election.

Last week, Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said the people did not like to see their wakil rakyat showing off their wealth.

He warned the State's elected representatives that those who did would not be fielded in the next general election.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, who commented on the matter on Sunday, said any proposal to make it compulsory for Umno and BN candidates to declare their assets would have to be discussed by the party leadership.

Asked how he felt about the suggestion, Dr Mahathir said: "If such a suggestion is made, then it is good."

Asked whether the implementation of such a ruling would require an amendment to Umno's constitution, Dr Mahathir said it would not as it was "only an administrative matter".

Asked when the suggestion could be implemented if it was accepted, he said he did not know.

"The suggestion has just come from Tan Sri Khalil, and has yet to be decided upon by the party supreme council.

"When the council meets, then we will be able to consider the matter."