

Mahathir on delineation exercise by polls panel

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday said that the parliamentary and State constituencies delineation review that was carried out recently by the Elections Commission was aimed at "effective and comprehensive representation of the people".

The additional parliamentary and State constituencies were consistent with the social and economic developments in the country in the last 10 years.

The exercise was also necessitated by changing topography and population demography.

"The increasing population and electorate over the last 10 years is also responsible for the exercise," the Prime Minister said when tabling a motion on the Election Commission's report on the parliamentary and state constituencies delineation exercise for Peninsular Malaysia.

Primary Industries Minister Datuk Paul Leong seconded the motion.

The report, in two volumes, has to be submitted to Parliament as provided for in Section Nine, Schedule 13 of the Federal Constitution before it is implemented.

It was submitted to the Prime Minister on Nov 8.

Dr Mahathir said that the Government had studied the report in detail and had no intention of amending its findings and recommendations.

He also said that there were no significant differences in the number of voters since the Election Commission started its review in July 1982.

The voters' base used by the commission on Dec 31, 1982, was 5,238,278 voters.

There had been an increase of 88,056 voters

since then or 1.11 per cent of the total registered voters as at Dec 31, 1982.

The Prime Minister also said that the Elections Commission publicly displayed its review of the parliamentary and State constituencies from Jan 4 to Feb 4, 1984.

"From the display, the commission received 218 complaints," he said.

"Of this number, 132 complaints were accepted and investigated."

The revised parliamentary and State constituencies' boundaries were then put up for a second display to the public from July 30 to Aug 30 this year.

A total of 25 complaints were received and 10 cases were investigated.

The Election Commission then took three months to complete its draft of the review of parliamentary and State constituencies' boundaries for submission to the Government and Parliament.

The review was based on Section 2, Article 113 of the Federal Constitution that authorises the Election Commission to revise and to "reborder" parliamentary and State constituencies in not less than eight years from the last such exercise.

Parliament subsequently approved the

Federal Constitution (Amendment) (Number Two) 1984 Act which confirmed the eight-year period for the review and added that the exercise be completed within two years from its commencement.

Parliament had last year also approved the Federal Constitution (Amendment) Act 1983 which paved the way for the increase from the present 154 to 176 Members of Parliament.

Peninsular Malaysia has 18 new parliamentary constituencies while Sabah increased its constituencies from 16 to 20.

An additional parliamentary seat bringing the total number of seats in the Dewan Rakyat to 177 came about when Parliament approved the Federal Constitution (Amendment) (Number Two) 1984 Act. This included the Federal Territory of Labuan as another parliamentary constituency.

The developments at the parliamentary level were followed by the State Legislative Assemblies except Sarawak (which had parliamentary and State constituencies delineation exercise in 1977) resulting in an increase from 312 to 351 State Assembly seats.