

P.M.: WE'VE DONE WELL

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By KALIMULLAH HASSAN

To the polls in Sabah and S'wak — P3

ARAU, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that if the Barisan Nasional is returned to power in the general election, it would continue with policies which benefited the people.

He felt the Government had done quite well and that there would be no change.

He also felt he had handled the job as Chief Executive well.

He said his style might not be to everybody's satisfaction. "However, I think I'm handling it well," he said at the end of his nation-wide campaign tour here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan chief, said the only resentment came from people "who think they know how to run the country but do not have the courage to stand for election."

He said among these people "are those who call themselves social-action groups."

He said they would start rumours to prove their own arguments. "We will see on Aug 3 if they are right or I am right," he told a Press conference.

On calls by critics that the Barisan should be denied a two-third majority because of its "arrogance," Dr Mahathir replied:

"Are we arrogant? I don't see that we are arrogant."

Dr Mahathir also said the people had got along well except for one "minor" incident in 1969 "when some people who thought they had won the election tried to throw their weight around.

"Otherwise, the people subscribed to racial harmony," he said.

He added that among the various races in Malaysia, there was a tremendous amount of understanding.

Asked if the lack of a two-third majority

would affect racial harmony, Dr Mahathir said: "No. This country can manage its racial problem well enough. But a two-third majority will be better."

Dr Mahathir, who had predicted a "landslide victory" for the Barisan in the election, admitted that the coalition was finding it tougher this time in States like Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah.

He was, however, confident the Barisan would still win in these States. "We may lose a few seats this time... we may not. Elections are never certain."

To another question that if the Barisan did not win as many seats as in the last election, would it be regarded as a loss for the coalition, Dr Mahathir said:

"According to your theory, if we have been scoring 10 goals all the time, we will lose if we score nine goals. I don't think so.

"Even if we win 51 per cent, I'll consider it as a victory for us. But of course two-thirds will be better."

He said he was confident of a landslide victory "because our reports show we can win two-thirds."

Dr Mahathir warned that a developing country like Malaysia could not afford to "fool around."

"We need a strong government. If we have less than two-third majority, there will be buying of elected members as has happened in other countries and this will create instability and chaos.

"If we have two-thirds, they will need a bigger number to buy over (as representatives). So there will not be much leverage for people who don't have principles.

"We are in the serious business of running the country."

On PAS' claims it had made inroads into several States, Dr Mahathir said: "They think they have. We will see on Aug 3."

Dr Mahathir visited all the States except for Sabah and Malacca during the nine days of campaigning which ends tomorrow for the peninsula and today for Sabah and Sarawak.

He made several stops in Kedah and Perlis today. He will cast his vote in his Kubang Pasu constituency on Sunday before returning to Kuala Lumpur.