

DR M: IT'S MY STYLE

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JOHORE BARU, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has denied accusations by Datuk Musa Hitam that his style of leadership was heading towards a dictatorship.

"I am now 63 years old. When he said future trend, does he mean a year, 10 years or 15 years?" the Prime Minister asked.

Dr Mahathir said Datuk Musa's accusations were contained in video tapes which were being used by Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad in his campaign for re-election to the Johore Baru parliamentary seat.

He said Datuk Musa had also accused him of dominating Cabinet meetings and not giving Ministers a chance to speak.

"How can this be when the meetings last for four hours? I



cannot be speaking for four hours continuously." Dr Mahathir said at a dinner tonight for Barisan election workers at the Mentri Besar's residence.

"When I propose a certain plan, it is my style to explain in detail what it is all about. Is this dictatorship?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir said Datuk Musa had also said that his (Dr Mahathir) leadership style was different from those of Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak or Tun Hussein Onn.

"Leadership styles vary ... I have my own style and others have theirs. In fact, Datuk Musa had, in the past, complained to me about Tun Hussein's inability

to make decisions fast," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he would not change his style of leadership "even if we lose the by-election, which is unlikely."

"I will continue with my style and the plans that I have drawn up with my colleagues in the Government."

On his sternness, which was also raised by Datuk Musa, Dr Mahathir said a leader should be firm, able to stand by his words and not be easily influenced.

Dr Mahathir said he stood by what he had said, adding that there were certain people who did not seem to remember what they had said and kept changing their views.

Dr Mahathir said there were some people who did not consider the by-election as a process to elect a people's representative.

"For them it is an avenue to direct their anger and hatred towards me. If these people really want to have a good fight ...

they should come to Kubang Pasu," he added.

Dr Mahathir said he was sad that Datuk Musa had made the accusations against him and had asked the voters to use the by-election to send a warning to him.

"I initially did not want to see the video, but I was told ... *dia banyak marah pada you* ... so I finally saw the tape.

"After seeing it, I was so upset ... by the acts of the man I had helped to become Deputy Prime Minister ... the man who would have succeeded me as Prime Minister."

Dr Mahathir said he still regarded Datuk Musa as a friend. "In politics we fight, but why tarnish my name in a by-election?" he asked.

He recounted his support for Datuk Musa during the fight with Tengku Razaleigh Haniffah for the deputy president's post in the 1981 and 1984 party elections, saying he had to reveal some-

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thing personal because of Datuk Musa's accusations.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had always followed the Constitution and the law, and added that it even chose to disregard the acts of certain people who had breached the rules during nomination day of the by-election.

"These people turned their procession into a rally ... with their so-called leaders addressing the crowd with a loud-hailer and without the permission of the police. If we wanted, we could have arrested these people," he added.

Dr Mahathir said his message to the voters was to support the Barisan candidate, Haji Mas'ud Abdul Rahman, saying he would be able to serve them well.

"We are prepared to give Haji Mas'ud all the help he needs to serve the people of Johore Baru effectively," he added.