

# Don't exploit anti-Federal views, PM tells Sabah parties

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today told political parties in Sabah not to exploit anti-Federal sentiments to win votes in the State election next month.

The Prime Minister said the use of such tactics was unhealthy and would create suspicion between those in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and Sarawak.

He was replying to questions by newsmen after chairing a Barisan Nasional pre-council meeting at Parliament House.

"I ask political parties not to exploit anti-Federal sentiments as an issue because it is unhealthy.

"If we do that, the people will be divided. It will also lead to feelings of suspicion between those in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah

and Sarawak. This is not good for unity," he said.

On allegations by certain political parties that Sabah was left behind in development, Dr Mahathir said this remained to be seen, noting that its level of development should be compared with that of Kelantan, Perlis and Kedah.

The Sabah election will be held on July 16 and 17.

On the decision by Parti Rakyat Sabah (PRS), led by Datuk James Ongkili, to work with Semangat 46, Dr Mahathir said anyone was free to make his stand.

"What is important is for the people to determine their own fate.

"If they want to elect people without a firm stand... who jumps here and there like a frog, they should not regret later when they have a chaotic Gov-

ernment with a mentality of a *lallang*."

Dr Mahathir said the present Government had a record of firm policies since it came into power since Merdeka, adding that the country had progressed tremendously under it.

"Indeed, today we are recognised as one of the more successful countries among developing nations."

"The people were urged to judge for themselves the state of development in the country and the policies initiated by the Government to create more employment towards their betterment.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional was prepared for the by-elections for the Kuala Linggi State constituency in Malacca and Ki-

jal State seat in Terengganu.

He said the Barisan Nasional was confident of winning, adding that it would nominate its candidates soon.

Asked whether it would be best to have a general election instead of wasting money on the two by-elections, Dr Mahathir said a by-election must be held because it is stated in the law.

"The question of wasting money does not arise.

"We cannot hold a general election to save money on two by-elections," he said.

On speculation that the general election would be held soon based on the directive issued by the Umno supreme council to all division Youth chiefs, Dr Mahathir said these were all indications.