

# PM: STOP PLAYING WITH FIRE

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By K. Parkaran

**TAIPING, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned political parties in Sabah today that they are "playing with fire" by raising anti-federal feelings in their manifestos.**

The Prime Minister said the Government was "feeling uneasy" over the anti-federal and state parochial sentiments being spread in the Sabah election campaigning.

"If this trend is followed in other states, our nation will be split,"

he told a press conference after an official visit to Bagan Serai this evening.

He was responding to a question on the implications of what was seen as anti-federal sentiments in the manifestos of the Sabah parties.

Dr Mahathir, who had earlier addressed about 15,000 people at Sekolah Menengah Bagan Serai, said the parties should realise that once these issues were brought up, they would be "etched" in the hearts and minds of the people for a long time.

He added: "There was a state in Peninsular Malaysia some time back which wanted to leave Malaysia and be an independent nation.

"They went to court to seek an order but they failed. It is clear that

no state is allowed to leave the federation. We don't want that to happen again."

Asked what he thought of the Parti Bersatu Sabah manifesto which called for a review of the Internal Security Act, he said:

"I think the ISA should not have been made an issue in the campaign. If they want a review we can have it.

"But the PBS is in the Barisan Nasional and has never raised this issue before. This is what upsets us.

"It must be also remembered that a review does not necessarily mean the ISA will be abolished. It can also result in strengthening the ISA and retaining it. That is the meaning of

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# Dr M to meet Lim on the election observers

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a review."

On the security situation in Sabah, Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said it was under control and that the Government was ready with additional manpower if the situation warranted.

"We will be deploying additional security forces during polling day (July 17) to ensure that the voters can exercise their democratic rights in peace," he said.

On the proposal by DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang for an all-party committee to set guidelines for the Commonwealth observers to oversee the general election, he said he would be meeting the Opposition Leader tomorrow on the matter.

"But I do not agree on the setting up of such a committee. We are implying that we have no trust in the observers if we resort to issuing guidelines and conditions.

"I don't understand the DAP. They have confidence in our Election Watch which I say is very one-sided.

"But on the other hand, they don't seem to have a seat in the Commonwealth team which is neutral and has no vested interest whatsoever in our country," he said.

Yesterday, Mr Lim said the foreign observers must come from countries with "functioning democracies."

"They should not be picked from one-party or no-party states or countries ruled by military juntas," he said.