

Power:

Firm

action

needed,

says Dr M

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Firm action is needed to deal with the country's energy crisis which has reached a critical situation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said steps needed to be taken to ensure there was sufficient electricity supply throughout the country.

Responding to reporters' questions upon his arrival at the Kuala Lumpur international airport in Subang from Bangladesh and Pakistan, he said there was a need to determine the causes of the frequent breakdowns and take action to overcome them.

He said when the Cabinet had asked and received details of breakdowns throughout the country, it was shocked by the high number of power breakdowns.

Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that Malaysia was capable of tackling the problem and added that the energy crisis would not affect investments.

He said Tenaga Nasional Berhad's application to acquire new turbines had been approved but the installation would take some time.

The Cabinet yesterday directed that no efforts be spared to overcome the problem of power shortage and asked Tenaga Nasional Berhad to expedite repairs and maintenance of power generating plants.

On the cancellation of the exercise to redelineate the electoral constituencies, Dr Mahathir said it would not be an obstacle to holding elections in the country.

He said he did not foresee any problems as the Election Commission had an existing electoral list which could be used in the event of a general election or by-election.

He said the Opposition would not win the general election no matter which electoral list was used.

"There is no problem. (Opposition Leader) Lim Kit Siang will not win even if we use the existing list. He will

## Dr M: Visit has achieved objectives

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continue to lose even if we increase or decrease the number of seats," he said.

He said the Government would not ignore the law and its regulations. It had to be extra careful when dealing with matters relating to the law, he said, adding that it would help if there was some flexibility when dealing with technicalities.

"We should accept that when something happens only due to technicalities, we have some flexibility on the matter ... but this is not for me to decide," he said.

He said when an officer

wrote the wrong date or made a mistake it should not be used to nullify a whole exercise.

Admitting that much time and energy spent on the redelineation exercise was wasted, he said it was common in the administration of a country that mistakes occurred.

Asked to comment on the challenge by Lim to Election Commission chairman Datuk Harun Din to resign because of the technical oversight, the Prime Minister said Lim should resign as secretary-general of the DAP since he seemed to have more power than the

president of the party.

Dr Mahathir returned after a six-hour flight from Karachi accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Asked to comment on his trip to Bangladesh and Pakistan, Dr Mahathir said the visit had achieved the objectives to foster relations and enhance trade and economic co-operation with these countries.

He said many areas of co-operation had been identified by the Government and private sector representatives in the delegation and

added that there were good opportunities for enhancing relations.

He said the visit could enhance co-operation between Asean and the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) mooted by Pakistan, and with the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC).

Malaysia may propose to Asean to invite representatives from the secretariats of ECO and SAARC to Asean ministerial and heads of government meetings.

He said through ECO there was potential for Malaysia to penetrate the markets of Central Asia.

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