

Constitution: Plan for two more amendments

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By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Federal Constitution will be amended to allow a State Assemblyman who is also a Member of Parliament to be appointed a Federal Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

This is one of two proposed amendments to the Constitution that will be tabled at the next meeting of Parliament next month, he added.

The other is to provide for no by-election to be held within two years before the next general election is scheduled.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting here.

Under the Constitution, Parliament, unless sooner dissolved shall continue for five years from the date of its first meeting and shall then stand dissolved.

Responding to questions by reporters on the proposed amendments, he said the constitution currently states that an elected State Assemblyman would have to vacate his seat if he is appointed a Minister.

"This situation has to be corrected because a Chief Minister is allowed to be a Member of Parliament. This is unfair and we have to correct this through constitutional amendments."

Dr Mahathir had an-

nounced on May 19 the appointment of Sabah Umno deputy liaison chief Tun Datu Mustapha Harun, 75, as Minister for Sabah Affairs.

Mustapha, who is the Assemblyman for Usukan and MP for Limbawang, is yet to be sworn in as a Minister.

Under Clause 43(8) of the Constitution, a State Assemblyman must vacate his seat before he can be sworn in as a Minister.

Currently two Chief Ministers are also elected Mem-

bers of Parliament.

Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Taib Mahmud is the MP for Samarahan while Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan is the MP for Keningau.

On the second proposed amendment, he said: "Sometimes we are forced to hold by-elections due to deaths or resignations just before a general election is held.

"We want to make it mandatory that there will be no by-election two years before the next election is sched-

uled," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the supreme council also decided that Umno would organise an educational seminar on manpower development in view of the manpower needs due to the rapid economic growth.

He said Penang Deputy Chief Minister Ibrahim Saad, Deputy Finance Minister Encik Ghani Othman, Deputy Public Enterprises Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and Encik Hassan Harun have been ap-

pointed to organise the seminar.

The seminar is being held because the party felt that the present education and manpower needs may not be sufficient to cope with the rapid industrial growth.

"Although there has been success among Bumiputeras in the field of education and training, we feel much more can be done to meet the demands of rapid industrial growth," he said. The seminar would come up with proposals on how to meet the demand.