

Dr M says two-thirds majority should be retained

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said a two-thirds majority provision for amend the Federal Constitution should be retained.

He said if the provisions to amend the Constitution are made easier by requiring a mere simple majority vote of the Parliament it would make the minorities living in the country become suspicious.

"My opinion is that the two-thirds majority should be retained. We do not want the minorities to feel that their rights, guaranteed in the Constitution, could be easily violated by a simple majority vote," he said in response to questions from reporters.

Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Zahir Ismail had said on June 14, that the provision requiring a two-thirds majority vote to amend the Constitution should be changed to a simple majority to simplify procedures in line with the needs of the Constitution.

Dr Mahathir, who returned from a 10-day official visit to China, was speaking at a Press conference at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang.

He was met on arrival by Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha, Deputy Ministers and other senior officials.

Commenting on his trip, Dr Mahathir said it was very successful, and added that it was necessary for the business community who signed more than 30 agreements and Memoranda of Understanding to follow up on their projects.

"This is the only way to ensure the success of the ventures. The Government on its part will offer to assist at the official level, if such assistance is required.

"The Chinese officials have also given an assurance that they will give their full support to ensure the success of the projects," he said.

The Prime Minister also praised China for its hospitality during his visit with a 290-member delegation, adding that the Chinese Government had made all the arrangements, including providing its own aircraft for travel within the country.

"This is evidence of their friendliness towards Malaysia and I think it sort of

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'Not contesting is also democracy' --

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enhances the already close relations between the two countries," he said.

Asked to comment on statements by certain Umno leaders who had said the party supreme council's call that the posts of president and deputy president should not be contested was merely a guideline and that

in a democracy contests should be allowed, Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said:

"Not contesting is also being democratic. Democracy does not mean there must be contests. Just contesting for the sake of contesting is a waste of effort. There must be an objective if someone wants to contest," he said.

Asked by a reporter from the *Star* who alleged that there were moves by supporters of Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to obtain nominations for him to contest for the deputy presidency, Dr Mahathir said:

"This shows that they are not supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar. These people are

working for themselves. They hope that if their boss gets promoted they can also climb up too."

However, there has been no reports in the Press or elsewhere that the supporters of Anwar had initiated moves to obtain nominations for Anwar for the deputy presidency.