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Dr M: NCC inputs needed to draw up OPP3

Kamarul Yunus

THE National Consultative Council (NCC) ought not be a mere "rubber stamp" for the Government to implement its development policy, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad .

"We want their ideas," he said, adding that the council's inputs are required to help chart the course of the country's development.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after a closed door Umno Youth's pre-poll gathering and the launching of a four-day youth course in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Prime Minister was asked about the thrust of the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), which will replace the current one introduced in 1990.

"That (thrust of OPP3) is up to the consultative council to suggest. But we are long-term planners...the Government will try to guide the council," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the NCC will prepare strategies and put up a case whether the OPP3 should span 10 or 20 years.

The Government had set up the multi-racial and multi-sector NCC to formulate strategies for the New Economic Policy introduced in 1970. On the political front, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said Malaysians risk losing the good things they now enjoy in life if the coming general election is allowed to result in a "hung" Parliament which leaves no strong party to rule the country.

"The people, especially Umno Youth members, must not take things for granted. If we have a hung Parliament...people will suffer economically, socially and politically," he said.

Asked whether a date has been decided for the election, he said "it will definitely be held before July next year".

"The other day, I said by April, but it is actually July...I have extra two months or about a year from now to call for the election.

"We can have it (election) any time, but we do not want to waste public money by holding elections early, or often," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said he intends to resume his visits to other states soon, adding that his recent trips to Sabah, Johor and Selangor had been fruitful and encouraging.

On disciplinary action taken by Umno, Dr Mahathir said between 300 and 400 members have been expelled since former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked from the Government and political posts last September.

Compared to the split in the party in 1987 when former Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah left to form the now defunct Parti Semangat Melayu 46, the situation is not serious, he said.

"Several Umno supreme council members joined Tengku Razaleigh then," he noted.

As for the Opposition, Dr Mahathir said their proposed cooperation would not work out because they are too busy fighting each other.

"They lack the focus and interest in developing the country, and in giving Malaysians a good life. They are just interested in pursuing private ambitions," he said.

At the gathering, Dr Mahathir also presented a Malaysian flag and a banner to Dr Shamsul Anuar Sulaiman, who will lead a 13-member Malaysian medical mission to help ethnic Albanian refugees in Kosovo. The team,

comprising several doctors and Umno members, will be in Kosovo from June 18 to July 2.

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