

19/12/1999

Dr M repeats call to MPs to serve with commitment

PUTRAJAYA, Sat. - Having told Cabinet Ministers to serve the rakyat and fulfil pledges made by the Barisan Nasional, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today repeated the instructions to the ruling coalition's MPs.

The Prime Minister and BN chairman told them to "go down to the rakyat" and perform their duties well because they had promised the electorate this while campaigning.

He reminded them to take their responsibility seriously and said they should visit their constituencies and pay attention to problems which arose.

"Besides visiting their constituencies, they should also be present at Parliament sittings," he said at a news conference after chairing the BN pre-council meeting prior to the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara meetings, at the Prime Minister's Department.

Bernamea quoted Dr Mahathir as saying that he had at times found seats empty at the Dewan Rakyat because MPs were absent and sometimes there was no quorum.

"I saw Lat's cartoon today, so it crossed my mind there may be some truth in what he says. During the election, everyone makes fiery speeches but when elected, they sometimes fail to attend Dewan sittings."

Later, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, when met, said what she understood from the term "visiting the constituency" was that appropriate action must be taken to overcome problems.

"I interpret it as holding dialogues with all people in my constituency and not just going back to meet people from the party."

She said that such dialogues would enable the people to bring up their problems.

She added the problems included those relating to health, livestock and drainage.

Rafidah said the people were sometimes not too bothered with development as long as their problems were given attention by their elected representatives.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Education Ministry and Member of Parliament for Sungai Petani Datuk Dr Mahadzir Mohamed Khir said besides having good rapport with the community, elected representatives should serve as motivators of activities.

He planned to set up a development committee in his constituency.

He said the development committee would comprise representatives of BN component parties.

This, he said, was to obtain feedback from constituents.

MCA Wanita chief and Raub MP Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen said the Prime Minister directed all MPs to visit their constituencies regularly.

"He told us not to just sit at home when we go back to our constituencies.

"We should meet the people more often, listen to their grouses and help them overcome problems," said the Culture, Arts and Tourism Deputy Minister.

National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said the Prime Minister wanted elected representatives to be more committed in serving the people.

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