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Expiry of moratorium has no bearing on polls

Fadzil Ghazali

THE expiry of the moratorium on repatriation of foreign portfolio funds this September 1 has no bearing on the date of the country's coming general election, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"That (the moratorium) is not a factor at all. That does not affect us. It affects other people. We have enough money to pay for all this things," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur after launching the Wanita Umno Combined Work Unit yesterday.

The moratorium on repatriation of foreign portfolio funds was imposed last September when the Government introduced its selective capital control measures to protect and restore the country's economy. The introduction of the capital control measures had helped improved the country's total market capitalisation for the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange. It increased from RM181.49 billion on last September 1 to RM489.25 billion last May 1.

There were speculations that the country would experience massive outflow of funds when the moratorium expires this September.

Dr Mahathir also said Barisan Nasional (BN) must retain its two-thirds majority in Parliament so that no component party or member of Parliament will be in a position to threaten the BN's stability and strength.

Dr Mahathir who is also BN Chairman, said the two-thirds majority is not sought after by BN because the ruling party wants to amend the Constitution as alleged by the Opposition.

He added that even though a two-thirds majority in Parliament allows the BN Government to amend the Constitution, it is not the objective of achieving such a win.

"What is more important is that it will provide the country with a strong government.

"The Government's strength and stability would be in danger if any component party or elected representative threatened to join the Opposition if its or his demands were not met.

"If we are subjected to such threats, then we cannot possibly have an effective government as we will be in a continuous state of fear. We have not amended the Constitution for a long time now," he added.

In his speech earlier, Dr Mahathir said women plays an important role in the country's development as they also represent the bulk of Malaysia's population.

"If we do not utilise the manpower provided by the women, they country will be weakened as there are many areas where women have advantages and more strength," he added.

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