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`Two-thirds majority needed to ensure continued progress'

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BARISAN Nasional (BN) needs to win at least a two-thirds majority in the 10th general elections to ensure the country's continued progress and pave the way for the implementation of new ideas for further development, says Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The BN chairman and Umno president, citing his poem entitled "Perjuangan Yang Belum Selesai", said there are many more things that the BN Government can do "now and after my time to enable the country to achieve industrialised nation status by the year 2020".

"The BN feels that it is its responsibility to carry out the new ideas to further develop the country," he told local media editors in Putrajaya yesterday.

The Government has pioneered efforts such as the New Economic Policy to restructure society and alleviate poverty, privatization, Malaysia Inc, the Look East policy and Islamic banking.

In addition, Malaysia devised a solution to the economic crisis of the past two years entirely on its own, Dr Mahathir said.

"The revival of the economy...the solution is entirely our own. We did not seek help from outside."

In fact, the very idea of Pas and DAP working together is borrowed from the BN. "The Opposition is now forced to be non-racist. It is our idea."

The Government has also always stressed the development of the agricultural sector and this has led to a decline in the nation's food import bill. More recently, it has paid civil servants their bonuses in six instalments instead of one lump sum to sustain consumer spending as well as organised home ownership campaigns to spur housing industry activity.

"I can list 100 things that we have done," Dr Mahathir said.

The first two hours of the weekly Cabinet meetings are spent exchanging ideas on how to further develop the country, he noted, adding that the Multimedia Super Corridor and the KL International Airport in Sepang are but two examples of the fruit of these exchanges.

On the new Federal Administrative Centre in Putrajaya, he said it is a city which the country can be proud of. "We took only three years to build it. I laid the foundation in 1996 and we moved in this year."

The people must be vigilant against any attempts - economically, socially, culturally or politically - to jeopardise all that the nation has achieved as well as its potential for further progress.

"We should hold dearly to our cultures and values which are no less than those of the developed countries," Dr Mahathir said.