

22 NOV 1999

Mahathir-Government

TWO-THIRD MAJORITY WILL ENSURE A STRONG GOVERNMENT, SAYS MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Barisan Nasional (BN) needs a two-third majority so that the country will have a strong and solid government.

He said that a government without a big majority would collapse in the event that members join the opposition parties.

"We want a two-third majority not to amend the constitution, but without a two-third majority, with only 51 per cent, when two or three cross over to the opposition parties, the government will collapse," he told members of the Malaysian Ex-Servicemen's Association, at his office, here.

He said that a government with a slim majority would not be solid and strong resulting in failure in making important decisions like tax enforcement, opposed by some quarters.

Citing the New Economic Policy (NEP) aimed at assisting the Bumiputeras, he said that it could not be implemented if the government was not strong.

"But if we get only 51 per cent, our members join the opposition parties, the government will collapse. So we cannot afford to assist and implement the New Economic Policy," he said.

The prime minister said that a strong government with a big majority now would not collapse if members were to join the opposition parties.

The BN, comprising 14 component parties, would also remain solid in the event that two or three parties were to join the opposition, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that a strong government was also needed to defend the nation which was still "young" even though the country had been independent for 42 years.

"We cannot be sure that once we achieve independence, we will remain independent forever. Once we achieve independence, we can only remain independent if we know how to defend our country," he said.

He said that peace and unity were vital to prevent any attempts to dominate the country.

Such attempts could be seen in a neighbouring country where some provinces were fighting for independence, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government would always appreciate the services and sacrifices of servicemen including those who had retired, especially those who defended the country against the communist.

At the meeting, the 200 members representing the association pledged support for Dr Mahathir's leadership. The association has 200,000 members.

-- BERNAMA

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