

30 JUN 1999

Election-Mahathir

TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY NEEDED TO PREVENT THREAT TO BN STABILITY

KUALA LUMPUR, June 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the 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.

The Prime Minister, who is BN Chairman, said such a win was necessary so that no BN component party or elected representative would threaten to join the opposition party.

Speaking to reporters after launching the Wanita Umno Combined Work Unit here, Dr Mahathir said the BN wished to stress that the two-third majority was not being sought to amend the Constitution as claimed by the Opposition.

Dr Mahathir said even though with a two-thirds majority in Parliament the BN Government could amend the Constitution "but what is more important is that it will provide for a strong government."

The Government's strength and stability would be in danger if any BN 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," he said.

He said the question of amending the Constitution as claimed by the Opposition did not arise.

"We have not amended the Constitution for a long time now."

Asked whether Wanita Umno would be given additional parliament and state seats in the general election, Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said: " We will consider base on the requirements.

" If they are eligible, we'll give them. But, sometimes the men will not give way," he said.

He said the movement had not made an official request for increase in seats but merely expressed its intention.

Dr Mahathir, however, acknowledged that women's contributions in nation-building and in Umno must be appreciated.

Apart from having certain capabilities, they were more serious than men, he said.

For instance, he said, while the male students from local universities focused attention in irresponsible activities such as demonstrations, the female students studied hard and graduated as lawyers, doctors and engineers.

Asked if the one-year moratorium of the holding of portfolio capital by foreign investors which expires on Sept 1 would be a factor in calling for the general election, Dr Mahathir said: "No factor at all.

"It doesn't affect us. It affects other people. We have enough money to pay for all," he said.

The moratorium, part of the selected capital controls imposed by Malaysia, is aimed at curbing excessive speculations on the stock market and in the process insulate the economy from the regional financial turmoil.

Among those present at the closed-door gathering today was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

-- BERNAMA

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