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Dr Mahathir dismisses fears about non-Malays losing political clout

BANGI, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed fears that non-Malays in the country would lose their political clout due to demographic imbalances.

"I don't think so, how can it happen?" he said after participating in the PDRM/TNB International Endurance Ride 2001 equestrian competition this morning.

He was asked if Chinese- and Indian-based political parties would eventually be dissolved as the Malay population grew significantly.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu was reported as saying that the Chinese and Indians would eventually lose political power and be forced to dissolve their parties if both communities registered further negative birth rate.

Samy Vellu was responding to data released from the 2000 census which showed a significant growth rate for Malays, compared to the sliding rate of the Chinese and Indians over the last decade.

Reiterating that the Barisan Nasional would not tolerate racial discrimination, Dr Mahathir said that the ruling coalition appreciated all the races under its fold.

"In Barisan Nasional we have no problem, we recognise all races ... they are all represented in BN," he said, allaying fears that non-Malay-based parties would eventually become redundant.

"However, we note that the opposition parties obviously discriminated against other races despite claiming to be non-racial."

On Keadilan president Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's open invitation for DAP to rejoin the opposition front, he said that it was "their" prerogative.

"Maybe they have no friends now," he said in jest.

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