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BN parties ready to accept PM's decision

Patrick Sennyah; Chow Kum Hor; Shahrum Sayuthi

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Barisan Nasional component parties are ready to accept any decision by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the allocation of seats for them in the next general election.

They expressed confidence today that the give-and-take spirit of the BN would prevail and there would be no problem among component parties in reaching a consensus over the seat allocations.

Dr Mahathir, who was in Johor Baru yesterday, advised BN component parties to abide by the BN supreme council's decision on the number and location of seats in the next general election.

He had said that component parties should readily accept decisions he makes, in his capacity as the coalition chairman, as a smart step to prevent internal disputes.

MCA vice-president Datuk Chan Kong Choy, who is also the party's constituency redelineation committee chairman, said BN had a long and healthy tradition in seat allocation among component party members.

"BN has its own ways of doing things. MCA has full confidence that Dr Mahathir will allocate a fair share for the party," said Chan, who is also Deputy Finance Minister.

Chan did not say how many additional seats MCA hoped to get following the redelineation exercise but merely said experience had shown that the allocation was done fairly.

In Johor Baru, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the party trusted Dr Mahathir in ensuring that the allocation of seats would be fair and acceptable to all.

"We will accept and respect whatever decision Dr Mahathir makes on the allocation of seats. We leave it to his good judgment," he said.

Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye said in past general elections, the formula for seat allocation had worked well and led to the success of the BN as a unique coalition of political parties representing the various races.

"We are confident that all future allocations will be acceptable."

Twenty new parliamentary seats and 44 new state seats are expected to be created under the Election Commission's ongoing redelineation exercise.

They are expected to be in Sabah, Sarawak, Johor, Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Federal Territory and Pahang, while there will be no new seats in Terengganu, Kelantan, Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Penang.

EC chairman Datuk Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman said in May that a study of the redelineation of election boundaries was completed and would be displayed for public viewing by July or August.

The criteria used for determining election boundaries included the number of voters, administrative facilities, voting facilities and difficulties encountered in these areas.

The last process had been conducted, approved and gazetted in March 1994. The Federal Constitution states that a review and redelineation exercise should be carried out every eight years.