

A Cabinet post isn't negotiable, says Dr M

NST 29 JUN 1981

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — A Cabinet post is not negotiable, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Speaking to reporters during the morning tea-break at the Umno General Assembly, he said: "The Prime Minister can ask anyone he likes."

However, he added, it is normal for the Prime Minister to consult the person concerned if he wishes to take up or stay in a particular post.

The Deputy Prime Minister and new Umno president was asked to comment on whether there would be any resignations from the Cabinet apart from Datuk Hussein Onn.

The Cabinet will meet on July 15 and Datuk Hussein Onn will chair it for the last time, he said.

The National Front will also meet on the same day and Datuk Hussein will then make his decision about stepping down as the Front chairman, he added.

Asked to comment on speculation that a Cabinet reshuffle would take place before the 15th, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: "I will not assume anything."

He had recently said there would be no radical changes as there were a few vacancies only in the Cabinet with Datuk Hus-

sein leaving, such as the Defence and, possibly, the Trade and Industries portfolios.

Commenting on last night's elections of members to the Umno Supreme Council, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the new line-up "is balanced."

The fact that many Mentris Besar had secured places in the Council pointed to the greater role they had been playing, he said.

He said the balance in the composition of Supreme Council members "augurs well for the party," adding that whatever balance needed would be made up via the seven appointed members.