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MARCH 29 IT IS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The Dewan Rakyat and State Assemblies in Peninsular Malaysia will be dissolved on March 29, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced today.

He said it was now up to the Election Commission to decide on the nomination and polling dates.

However, the Prime Minister said he expects the election to be held in April.

He told newsmen after chairing his first Barisan Nasional supreme council meeting that he informed the Yang di-Pertuan Agong about his decision on the dissolution of Parliament last Wednesday.

He said the theme of the Barisan Nasional during this election will be: "The government that is clean, efficient and trustworthy".

In a jovial mood, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, flanked by Datuk Musa Hitam, Encik Ghafar Baba and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, said he only had a right to decide on the dissolution of Parliament.

"Because we like to have the Parliament and State Assemblies election together, I will inform the State Governments to also dissolve the assemblies at the same time.

"The date which I have fixed for dissolution is March 29," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he would be informing the Election Commission about the dissolution date "and they will decide on the dates of nominations and polling."

"This is their right, so I cannot inform you all about these dates," he added.

On the allocation of seats, the Prime Minister said he will hold separate discussions with the component parties on the matter but the "final decision will be mine."

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said "while there will be problems about this, there is no problem we cannot overcome."

"I'm optimistic by nature," he quipped.

He said there were many factors which must be considered in the selection of candidates "and I hope the parties will exercise some common sense here."

He said all the coalition parties will be using the Barisan Nasional symbol during the election.

As to whether Usno and Berjaya will use their own symbols, the Barisan chairman said "even if they don't talk to each other, they will be using the Barisan symbol."

He also refuted reports that the MCA and Gerakan might use their own symbols. "I don't know whether you have other information, but as far as I know, they will not use their own symbols," he added.

On the Gerakan and MCA candidates who had stood as independents after failing to secure the Barisan candidacies, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the decision to place candidates was made by consensus.

"We hope to solve these problems...though this is not quite in our control. The enforcement of rules and discipline is by the component parties. It is not for Barisan's machinery to do that," he said.

As to whether the leaders of the component parties had given their assurance that these incidents would not occur, he said: "They listened intently and seriously to my exhortations and I think that they got my point."

He said he had a meeting with the Mentris Besar and Chief Ministers last Friday "to assess the strength of the States so that we would be able to determine the date of the dissolution."

Asked why he was announcing the dissolution date earlier than he had to, he said this was to allow the necessary preparations to be made.

"This is also to give a chance to the Opposition to prepare themselves for their, you know, final days," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional Government hoped to improve its 1978 election record.

"I think we can do it,"

he said confidently.

On whether the Barisan was facing any problem States, he said "all states are problem states and all states are good states."

He also said the ban on public rallies will stay as a lot of problems have to be faced if such rallies are allowed.

"There are problems of security and also the rallies sometimes become like a pest."