

PM rules out simultaneous polls

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KUCHING, Fri. — The Prime Minister today ruled out the possibility of the general election being held simultaneously with the Sabah State elections scheduled for May 5 and 6.

He said simultaneous State and parliamentary elections for the whole country were also not possible because Sarawak had its State elections only two years ago.

It would involve unnecessary waste of funds, he told a Press conference this evening at the end of his two-day visit to Sarawak.

"Simultaneous State and parliamentary elections can only be held in Peninsular Malaysia," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said in response to a question as to whether he foresaw a general election being held together with the Sabah State elections.

Asked if it was now easier for him to fix a date for the general election since he has completed visiting all but one State (Sabah) in his nation-wide tour and has assessed the situation, the Prime Minister replied:

"I know the situation better but whether it is easier or not ..." and shrugged his shoulders.

However, he said he was satisfied

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with the preparations being made by the component parties of the Barisan Nasional.

Dr Mahathir said the date did not matter as once the Barisan Nasional was ready, the election would be held.

"You'll be surprised when the date is announced," he said referring to Press speculation on the election dates.

The Prime Minister said he had no

idea if he was going to visit Sabah during the State elections but said other Barisan Nasional leaders would if there was a need.

"We work with only one party in the State (Sabah) and that is Berjaya so we cannot afford to be neutral. But so far we have not received any request from the party," he added.

On the need to help Berjaya in view of its poor performance in the last Sabah elections, the Prime Minister's response was: "What's wrong with Berjaya's performance? I don't see anything wrong. It is not Berjaya's wrong, it is that of other people."

Dr Mahathir also brushed aside a question about the possibility of a last-minute acceptance of the Sabah peace formula by the PBS when he said: "We do not bother about difficult problems."

Asked if the Sabah formula was still workable, he replied: "Hope springs

eternal in the breast of man."

On reports that the PBS might consider making a fresh application to join the Barisan Nasional, the Prime Minister said: "Our doors are always open to all kinds of applications."

To a question when he was likely to appoint a Deputy Prime Minister, he said: "We'll have one when we have one. The appointment will be made in due time. It is not a question of life and death."

Dr Mahathir said he was happy with his visit to Sarawak where he met local Barisan Nasional and Government leaders as well as the people in Sibu, Lundu and Kuching.

"There is no sign of any conflict here and there seems to be no big problem," he said.

The Prime Minister will conclude his nation-wide tour with a visit to the Federal Territory of Labuan next week.