

Opponents knew the risks, says Mahathir

NST 27 APR 1987

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said candidates in the party elections were aware of the risks when they decided to contest.

"When they win they are expected to get something, and when they lose they cannot be expected to get what they want.

"I was aware of the risks and accepted that if I lost, I could not expect to continue to live in Sri Perdana and be Prime Minister," he said when replying to points raised by representatives from Kelantan, Penang and Pahang, who expressed concern about what would happen to certain personalities in the party.

Dr Mahathir said in any contest the candidates would be aware of the risks.

"We must realise that when we win we get something but when we lose we do not get some things.

"What is the point of contesting against me, if the person who wins wants to hand over to me the outcome of his victory?"

He said in victory, the

question is not one of jealousy but of principles.

"We have our own stand in forming the Government. And to ensure that the Government is effective, we need to have work regulations.

"The question of whether we are loyal or not to the Prime Minister does not arise at all."

Dr Mahathir also replied to a point raised by a representative from Pahang who had questioned the selection of candidates for the general election.

Consultation

The Prime Minister said he was aware that in the party constitution, the Umno divisions would be consulted in the selection of candidates.

He said since the last election was a snap one, there was no time to consult the divisions and the task was therefore given to the respective heads of the State liaison committees.

Dr Mahathir said it was impossible for him to know

every candidate and to judge their abilities.

He, therefore, had to trust the judgment of the heads of the liaison committees.

It was only when he knew the candidates and was in a position to judge their abilities did he make a decision.

Generally, he said he accepted the recommendation from the State. "Therefore, it is wrong to accuse me of dropping just anybody."

Dr Mahathir said he was willing to convey to the supreme council the suggestion that the selection of candidates for the general election be made by the divisions and not the party president.

A general assembly could then be held to discuss the matter.

However, Dr Mahathir said he did not want to be held responsible if the party's performance was affected.

He warned that selection of candidates would be a tedious affair as there would

be contests right from branch level to elect candidates.

He called on the candidates to ponder this as the role of the party as the backbone of the Government could be affected.