

# QUOTAS TO GO IN TIME: P M

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By Wong Chun Wai

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the quota system based on races will eventually be abolished.**

The Prime Minister said it had always been the Government's ultimate objective to do away with the quota system.

"However, before that can happen, the communities that are lagging behind must be brought up to the level of the other communities," he said in response to questions from reporters after opening the Gerakan annual delegates conference.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on a call by Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik to replace the system based on racial quota with one based on justice and equality.

The Prime Minister said the decision would also depend on whether the weaker communities would be helped to improve themselves.

"It depends on us ... if we sincerely want to help, without discrimination in employment in the private sector and everyone is given an opportunity. I think it (the quota system) can be done away with fast," he said.

He quipped: "How can I match Razif Sidek in badminton you must give me a handicap but the (quota) system will not be practised forever."

Dr Mahathir said the people should do their part by not giving too much emphasis to racial factors in their daily work.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir told the assembly that an opposition party in a certain state had been threatening civil servants, village headmen and religious heads who refused to support the party.

He said the Federal Government took a serious view of the

matter as this had affected the administration of the State to some extent.

The Prime Minister said these officers were even afraid to be seen in the company of ministers and state officials because they feared repercussions from certain quarters.

Dr Mahathir said the people should decide whether they wanted the Barisan Government to be replaced by an opposition coalition, which he labelled as *Barisan Tiruan* (imitation Barisan).

"Imitation goods are inferior to the original," he said, adding that the people should be wary of such an alliance.

Dr Mahathir said the success of the Barisan concept had resulted in certain quarters trying to copy its formula.

"But it is doubtful whether it (Barisan Tiruan) can work because they are only out to fool the people and merely to fish for votes," he added.

Dr Mahathir described the opposition pact as "a hodgepodge collection of political opportunists sharing a common bed without even the formality of a political marriage — it smacks of adultery."

He also criticised MTUC leaders for their involvement in the opposition coalition.

"The MTUC claims that it will support anyone who is pro-labour," he said.

"If that is true, then they (MTUC) should throw out those who support moves to have Malaysia's GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) status withdrawn."

Dr Mahathir said it was the Barisan Nasional government which encouraged investments to help create jobs.

"MTUC leaders only wait for the jobless to get jobs and are only interested in using their positions for political gains," he added.