

PM: New front not a surprise

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is not surprised at the formation of the second Opposition pact as the Opposition has been known to contradict each other.

"We had expected them (the Opposition) to do something like that ... They've been saying one thing to one community and a totally different thing to another community.

"PAS, for instance, had told the Chinese community through the Chinese Press that the party will drop the term, Islamic State, from the manifesto (of the first Opposition pact). Unfortunately, this was learnt by the Malay Press and

the Malay community and so PAS denied having said it," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the formation of the new opposition coalition is just another instance of the Opposition contradicting each other again.

"We can expect to see more contradictions (among the Opposition) in this election," he told reporters after launching a new bimonthly in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He was commenting on the second opposition pact — Gagasan Rakyat — which was formed yesterday by Semangat 46, the DAP, All-Malaysian Indian Progressive Front, Partai Rakyat

Malaysia and Malaysian Solidarity Party. The first pact — Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah — comprises Semangat 46, PAS, Hamim and Berjasa. The establishment of the second pact is believed to be due to the inability of DAP and PAS leaders to see eye to eye on matters of principle.

On the changes made to the line-up by BN component parties MCA and MIC, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir thanked the leaders who will not be contesting, including some in Umno, for their services and for making way for the younger gen-

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eration of leaders.

"I would like to thank them for their service to their parties and the Barisan Nasional," he said.

The Prime Minister said he will meet Deputy Housing Minister Datuk S. Subramaniam regarding his position in the Government following the MIC's decision to exclude him from the party's line-up.

Earlier, launching Khidmat (Service), Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he is confident the new magazine will turn out to be an effective tool in promoting closer ties between the public sector and the people as well as the private sector.

The magazine, which aims to inform the public and the private sector of government policies and the public administration, is jointly published by the Modernisation, Ad-

ministration and Management Planning Unit (Mampu) in the Prime Minister's Department and Berita Publishing.

In his address, the Prime Minister said the Government's privatization programme, which is being implemented in stages, has proven to be beneficial for the Government and the employees of the government agencies involved.

He said in view of this, the Government will pursue the privatization policy more aggressively in future.

The Government is also committed to upgrading the services and the facilities of its agencies. Plans for automation and computerisation, he added, will be implemented from time to time to provide the people and the private sector with more efficient services.