

# Barisan relieved by party's pullout PBS was a thorn in the flesh, says PM

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KUANTAN, Wed. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) as a thorn in the Barisan Nasional's flesh and said the coalition was relieved by the party's withdrawal.

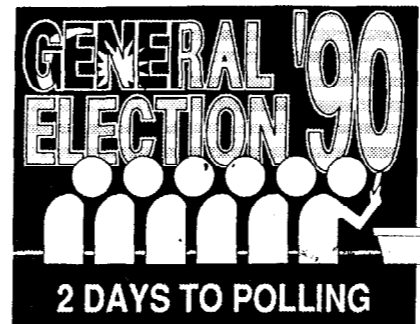
He said the party was such a troublesome component that he did not consider its pullout from the Barisan Nasional and its declaration to align itself with Semangat 46 as threatening the position of the coalition.

"With the thorn removed from the flesh of the Barisan Nasional, the pain is gone and the coalition is now in a more comfortable position," he said during a meeting with senior Federal and State Government servants at the Kuantan municipal hall here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chief, elaborated on this statement at a Press conference held later after his closed-door meeting with State Barisan Nasional candidates for the Oct 21 polls at the Pahang Umno headquarters building here.

He said the PBS refused to be fired by the BN spirit and its leaders behaved as if they were not Malaysians.

"The party leaders always harped about Sabah and nothing else. In their promotional song, the lyrics say Sabah will show the way. This paro-



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chial sentiment has put us in a difficult situation.

"They also demand for all sorts of things. It is very difficult for us to entertain all their requests.

"Now that they have left the Barisan Nasional, we feel a sense of relief. There is no one now in the coalition who continually creates problems for us."

On whether any independent candidate contesting for parliamentary seats in Sabah has approached the BN for support so far, the Prime Minister replied, "to my knowledge, no".

"We will support anyone contesting against the PBS except for the DAP."

Earlier, in his speech to about 1,000-odd senior civil servants, Dr Mahathir said under the democratic system, the people had the power to remove leaders who were autocratic or had failed to fulfil the mandate of the people.

He said the Opposition had made many promises in its manifesto, such as abolishing road tax and tolls.

He said they pledged to reduce taxes but at the same time proposed to increase expenditure.

"How is this possible? You have to have magical powers to do this."

He said one of the ways they could do it was to borrow heavily, which would lead the country to bankruptcy.

"Malaysia's annual inflation rate is between two and three per cent. But in certain countries the inflation rate is a whopping 20,000 per cent."

If Malaysia's economy and finance was not managed properly, the country would be plunged into a similar situation.

He said the Barisan Nasional would not make any promise it could not deliver but would work hard for the continued development and progress of the country if it was returned to power.

Dr Mahathir added Malaysia has been recognised as a model nation and many developing countries have sent their officials to study our success and efficient system of administration and this was made possible because of the strong Government.