

# Barisan Nasional 'ready for the polls anytime'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Barisan Nasional is prepared to go to the polls anytime as its machinery from the villages to the towns are only waiting to be activated, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said although the date of the general elections had yet to be decided, BN component parties were 90 per cent prepared for it.

To a question as to when the general elections would be held as the mandate to rule would expire in October next year, Dr Mahathir said: "The Government may serve the full term ... but may also call for elections at any time.

Replying to another question as to which was more likely to happen, he added: "I cannot tell... it is a secret."

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after opening the 41st MCA annual general assembly at Wisma MCA.

He, however, expressed confidence that the BN would win more parliamentary and State seats in the coming general elections.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said this was because the opposition parties had been weakened not only by members leaving their parties to join the BN but also by their leaders.

On the position of the opposition parties in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said many PBS MPs and State Assemblymen had now joined the BN.

"These leaders have not only joined the BN but have also brought in their supporters and we must ensure their continued support," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also confident that the coming elections would not see the BN suffering 100 per cent defeat in Kelantan like what happened in the 1990 general elections.

"It is possible for the BN to win a number of State and parliamentary seats this time," he said.

In the case of Penang, which the DAP was out to capture under its Tanjung 3 plan, he said the BN's control would be maintained unless the people "simply want to reject the BN."

"I do not know if the people of Penang want to reject the BN because in terms of service, the party has brought much benefit to them and they should give their support."

Replying to a question that the opposition was now without issues and that favours the BN, Dr Mahathir said: "Even if we wait longer, the opposition will still be without issues, judging from the country's strong economic performance."