

Dr M: BN leaders, members who commit 'unforgivable mistakes'

Out: Those who tarnish

By Farush Khan and Joseph Bingkasan

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. — Barisan Nasional leaders and members who commit "unforgivable mistakes" will not be picked to contest in the general election as their candidature could affect the image of the coalition and the Government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said here today.

"We will try our best to choose the best candidates who are good in all aspects," the Prime Minister added.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president and BN chairman, said the BN would select candidates who are loyal, capable and have good attributes.

However, he admitted, it was not easy to choose candidates with all-round qualities as he realised that "nobody is perfect".

"A good person sometimes may have bad qualities too. I accept that and if he does unforgivable things,

had on Sept 8 told reporters that he had met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur recently.

Dr Mahathir, when asked about the meeting, said that he could not comment on it as he had not been briefed on it by Anwar.

Pairin, whose party holds five of the 54 State seats in Sabah, had said PBS would leave it to the people to decide whether it should return to the BN fold.

Dr Mahathir, when asked whether the BN had made overtures to PBS to rejoin it, said: "No overtures ... we have enough people."

Asked to comment on the possibility of a strong challenge by the PBS in the general election, Dr Mahathir said the BN was prepared to face it.

"If we have to compete, we will face it. It is normal. We do not want a one-party State. There can be opposition. It is up to the people to determine the kind of Government they want.

we are forced to drop him," he added.

He was responding to questions by newsmen on the criteria of BN candidates for the general election before returning to Kuala Lumpur after an overnight visit to Sabah.

Asked whether the general election was around the corner, he replied in a lighter vein:

"You can safely say that, but whether it is near it is not safe to say".

On whether Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), which had quit the BN on the eve of the October 1990 general election, had expressed its intention to rejoin the coalition, the Prime Minister said that he had not received any request from the party.

PBS president and former Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan

will be dropped

image

"We want responsible opposition ... not those like (Lim) Kit Siang (the DAP secretary-general). He is not responsible. He only digs dirty things ... even things which are not dirty he makes it dirty," he said.

On a statement by Chief Minister Tan Sri Sakaran Dandai recently that the PBS had shown the willingness to co-operate with the BN in developing Sabah, Dr Mahathir said the BN welcomed such co-operation.

Asked whether his statement yesterday that there was no permanent enemy or friends in politics referred to Pairin, he said it did.

"He was not an enemy before, but now he is, so it is quite true that he is not a permanent friend. So now I

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'Barisan Nasional is flexible'

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hope he is not a permanent enemy. I have worked with a lot of people who were enemies before.

"We are very flexible. If you subscribe to the principles of the BN, if you are prepared to work together and share fairly, it will

work," he said.

On whether similar co-operation should prevail between the BN and other opposition parties, he said this should be the case.

"Actually in matters concerning national interest and those not concerning party activities, there should be co-operation."