

Dr M: Parties won't be allowed to sponsor independents

BN agreement on seats

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Components of the Barisan Nasional today agreed on the principles, which will take into account the racial mix in the constituencies, for the allocation of seats for the general election.

The BN components in the ruling coalition listened to the explanation of the principles given by BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when its supreme council met at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Speaking to newsmen after the meeting, Dr Mahathir said

all candidates from the coalition would contest under the BN banner, adding that he hoped the components would agree to the seat allocation both in principle and practice.

He reminded component party members against sponsoring independent candidates in the general election even if they disagreed with the choice of candidates.

He said: "I would like to remind component party members not to sponsor independent candidates just because they are dissatisfied with the candidates fielded by the party."

The meeting was attended by all 14 component members. Dr Mahathir said each party was

represented by three persons and the intention was to discuss the principles the BN would use for seat allocation and selection of candidates.

He added that much time was spent on explaining the principles which will be used by the BN on various matters. He, however, added that the meeting did not make any allocation of seats.

The respective heads of the component parties then unanimously supported Dr Mahathir's call for total support for any BN candidate in the election, adding that this has been one of the rallying points behind the BN's success all this while. (See story on Page 2).

Basically, the principle for the allocation of seats would take into account the racial mix in the constituencies. While seats could be given to BN components reflecting the constituency's racial majority, it is also possible that the candidate fielded would be someone from a different racial background.

When this happens, Dr Mahathir said that it was very important that all members of the BN support the chosen candidates.

Dr Mahathir, who is also UMNO president, said it was extremely important that the collective representation under the BN, rather than individuals, be given emphasis.

He said the BN had not ascertained the percentage of the races in the various constituencies. But in fielding a particular candidate, the BN would take into account the possibility of the component party winning the seat.

"It does not mean that just because the majority of constituents from that area are from one race that only that race will be represented in the choice of candidates," he added.

He said Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers would submit to him their plans for the allocation of seats. The BN president would then discuss these plans with the heads of component parties to get their agreement or make the necessary

changes.

A decision would then be made and that decision should be supported by all the parties.

He also said that not all component parties would be allocated parliamentary or State seats. Some party representatives could be made senators or be appointed as councillors in the local authorities or other posts.

Dr Mahathir, however, said that he was still dissatisfied with the election preparations made by the component parties, adding that they should gauge the support of the people

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Dr M confident over Kelantan

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towards the BN.

He said Umno's preparations were quite advanced and had already had a second dry run to gauge the response of the people. This had enabled Umno to rectify weaknesses at the grassroot level.

On the manifesto, he reiterated his earlier statement that there would only be one BN manifesto but certain States like Sabah and Kelantan would be allowed supplementary manifestos which will focus on their own problems.

He said the situation in these States were different from other States.

Asked whether he had seen the Kelantan BN manifesto, Dr Mahathir said he had not.

On the BN's chances of securing a victory in Kelantan, Dr Mahathir said: "Yes, chances are very good in Kelantan. We are going to win ... whatever (Menteri Besar) Nik Aziz (Nik Mat) may say."

Asked if the BN had received any application from the Indian Progressive Party (IPF) to join the BN, Dr Mahathir said the BN had

not received any application officially but that the principle in the BN is that acceptance must be based on unanimity.

This means that all components must agree to accept or reject members.

Asked whether the component parties would receive the same number of seats as in the 1990 election, he said since the number of seats had increased it was obvious that the number cannot be the same.

In 1990 there were 180 parliamentary seats compared with 192 now.

On the Pas call for a dis-

cussion of Islamic issues, Dr Mahathir said it was just an attempt to divert the attention of the people from the current issue affecting the party.

"We know this is just a tactic to run away from the problem. As far as we are concerned we will not try to create other issues."

Dr Mahathir also continued to keep the media guessing on the date of the general election.

Asked if he had given any views to BN component parties on when the election would be held, he said: "I have explained that general

elections will be held in 1995."

Asked which month, Dr Mahathir said it would be held in one of the 10 remaining months in the year.

Dr Mahathir added that about 3,000 people would attend the BN Convention on March 25 including Cabinet members, State executive councillors, Senators, MPs, members of the various State Assemblies and BN divisional coordination committee members.

He said he would open the convention and there would be a resolution at the end of it.