

# Non-members to get try-out

THE proposal to field candidates who are not members of Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties may be experimented in constituencies where there is a dispute over who should be allocated the seat, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister, speaking at a Press conference after the BN convention, said not many of such candidates would be fielded and added that the BN was still studying the issue including the criteria for selecting candidates and the constituencies.

He said there is a possibility that in some areas where assessment by the BN showed that a certain candidate who is not a member of a BN component party has the support of the people and has a chance to win, then the



candidate would be nominated.

"The concept may be experimented in areas where the BN has a 50-50 chance of victory or where the chances of winning are better with a certain candidate," he said, adding that the proposal has been accepted by BN members.

When asked whether the implementation of the proposal may be used by the Opposition to claim

that BN cannot reach a compromise on its list of candidates, Dr Mahathir said the Opposition can say what they want but what is important for the BN is that the people accept the candidate.

"This shows that the BN is getting much closer so much so that we collectively choose candidates even outside the BN."

Asked whether he has got the "inspiration" to call for the general election, the Prime Minister said: "I have tried very hard and looked in many directions but still there is no message. We will be ready whenever the election is held."

He said it was a political strategy to keep the Opposition guessing when the election would be held and to test their staying power since some Opposition parties had begun

putting up posters since last year.

He said the BN component parties had lots of stamina and could wait for the election to be called.

Dr Mahathir, the MP for Kubang Pasu, was also asked to comment on talk that he would be switching to the Langkawi parliamentary seat in the elections.

"I don't know. You will have to ask the people of Kubang Pasu. If they don't want me, I have to leave. But, so far, they have given me strong support."

On whether the BN would accept the application from the Indian Progressive Front to become a member, he said the BN components wanted first to see its support for BN candidates in the next general election.