

# Parliament dissolves today

By Ahmad A Taib  
and Farush Khan

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Prime Minister today announced that the Dewan Rakyat would be dissolved tomorrow to pave the way for the country's ninth general election since independence and ending almost a year of intense speculation.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Ja'afar Ibni Almarhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman, had given his consent to the dissolution.

Speaking at a specially called Press conference at the Prime Minister's Department here, Dr Mahathir said the Election Commission would announce dates of nomination and polling in due course.

Speaking to reporters in Kuching, the commission's chairman, Datuk Harun Din said he would hold a Press conference in the Sarawak capital tomorrow. He is likely to announce the dates then. Harun is on a nationwide tour of the commission's offices.

Dr Mahathir said he met the Yang di-Pertuan Agong before the weekly Cabinet meeting this morning and obtained his signature for the dissolution of Parliament.

The Prime Minister said: "In this Press conference, the Government announces that the 8th Parliament is dissolved effective Thursday, April 6, 1995. This will enable the general election to be held.

"The Yang di-Pertuan Agong gave the declaration of the dissolution to me and the Government had also advised the States affected to also do likewise with their Legislative Assemblies.

"The Election Commission and the Parliament were also informed of this dissolution.

"It will now be the task of the Election Commission to decide on the dates for nomination of candidates and the date for election.

That is all the announcement I am making."

With the exception of Sabah and Sarawak, all the other State Legislative Assemblies are expected to be dissolved tomorrow. Sabah held its State election last year while Sarawak had it in 1991.

This means that they still have a few more years to go before fresh polls are held.

According to the Federal Constitution, a general election must be held within 60 days from the date of the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat.

A total of 9,011,868 Malaysians will be eligible to vote in this general election. At stake are 192 parliamentary seats and 498 State Assembly seats.

A breakdown of the parliamentary seats are Perlis (3), Kedah (15), Penang (11), Perak (23), Selangor (17), Negeri Sembilan (7), Malacca (5), Johor (20), Pahang (11), Terengganu (8), Kelantan (14), Sarawak (27), Sabah (20), Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory (10) and Labuan Federal Territory (1).

Asked whether the Barisan Nasional was confident of getting the two-thirds majority in the polls, Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said: "God willing, we will

PLEASE TURN TO  
PAGE 2, COL 1

# Public rallies won't be allowed

□ FROM PAGE ONE

win with more than two-thirds majority.

"If we do not have the confidence, we will not call the elections."

Asked why he had chosen today to make the announcement, the Prime Minister said jokingly that he had gazed at the crystal ball, consulted the stars and studied the lines on his palm looking for inspiration to dissolve Parliament.

Asked what would the major issues be in the election, the Prime Minister said it would be continuity of the country's development.

He said: "It's the most important thing. If you start changing horses mid-stream, you are likely to drown. We don't want to

drown..."

Asked whether land would be an issue, he said the Opposition has no issue and this has led them to blow the land matter out of proportion. This was their attempt to influence the people, he added.

In this country, the Prime Minister said, the Government has acquired land all the time for development as this is for the good of the people.

"The Opposition is trying to make an issue of this, but I do not think people will accept it as an issue."

The Prime Minister was also confident of the BN's chances in urban areas, which were previously inclined towards the Opposition. He said the chances were brighter this time around as there had been a

change in attitude among the voters.

"Apparently there has been a change and this has been acknowledged by (Opposition Leader) Lim Kit Siang himself. However, the extent of the change will not be known until polling day," he said.

Dr Mahathir also quoted Abraham Lincoln when he said that the DAP "could fool some of the people some of the time, all the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time".

Asked when the BN manifesto would be made public and whether it would carry any specific theme, Dr Mahathir said that the manifesto, to be announced later, would certainly have a theme.

The BN and Umno Supreme Councils will meet

separately on Saturday, when the manifesto is expected to be made public.

Asked whether public rallies could be held during the election campaign, Dr Mahathir said: "No public rallies. The reason is very simple. Certain members of the opposition have ignored police instructions regarding this.

"Even in the last election, in 1990, thousands of PAS members crowded around polling booths and we had only two or three policemen trying to control the crowd.

"As a result many people who wanted to vote were not allowed to vote by this huge crowd of PAS members. So you can imagine what will happen if we allow public rallies."

Asked for his views on various *ceramah* attended

## during campaign period

by thousands of people, Dr Mahathir said these were confined to certain areas only. Public rallies could become very emotional and therefore uncontrollable, he added.

Asked whether he expects a long campaign period for the election, the Prime Minister said: "Well, that depends on the Election Commission. But we hope it would not be too long... too much heat could be generated."

Asked whether all the BN components have agreed and completed the exercise on seat allocation, the Prime Minister said it was practically completed.

He said: "We have some questions and dissatisfaction, but that is usual. We have 14 parties to satisfy... no one can satisfy all the 14

parties. In some other countries, they cannot even satisfy two parties or even one party.

"We must accept the fact that there has to be some disagreement but I expect they will close ranks once we have decided."

Asked about developments on the possibility of fielding candidates for the BN who may not come from any of its components, Dr Mahathir said: "There may be. We have not yet named the candidates. I haven't yet decided on them. I have seen some of the names but not all. I'm still studying them and I'll inform them soon."

Asked whether there were any additional criteria when selecting this type of candidates, other than their chance of winning, Dr Mahathir said he would be

studying other aspects of their background.

Asked whether the Government would consider giving airtime for the Opposition to campaign, the Prime Minister said no one would be given time on television to campaign, including the BN.

"I like to pin down the Opposition's lie that they have been denied airtime. We are also denied space in their media, which have nothing but nasty things to say about us.

"They never given us the chance to reply in their media. They control a number of papers and there are also those which are publicly anti-Government.

"Only people who read English newspapers assume that there is no space given

to the Opposition. But if you read the local media, especially the vernacular Press, which is much more widely read, then you will find that the Government has never taken action against them."

Asked what were the chances of the BN winning in Pas-led Kelantan, the coalition chairman said the party was confident of winning the State.

Asked what was the basis of this confidence, Dr Mahathir said this was because the BN promised to serve the people of Kelantan.

When asked whether former Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba and former Malacca Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik would be fielded, Dr Mahathir said this was also possible.