

Young and old, newcomers

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The line-up of Barisan Nasional candidates for the April 24 and 25 general election will be a fair mix of the young and old, veterans and newcomers, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Dr Mahathir who is the Barisan Nasional chairman said this had been the BN formula in the selection of candidates to face the elections.

"We have a fair mix of young and old, veterans and newcomers so that the party will be able to handle new issues with new ideas and not forgetting past experiences. That has been our formula," Dr Mahathir said in reply to a question from the Press after he launched the Barisan Nasional manifesto at the Tun Hussein Onn Hall of the Putra World Trade Centre here this morning.

The manifesto, titled "Barisan Nasional — Vision, Justice, Efficiency", promises continued development for the people and country.

Dr Mahathir said in the selection of candidates the BN "normally keep the old-timers (*orang lama*)" to

have continuity.

"But we also introduce new faces, many of whom comprise the young. If we only choose the old, this can be difficult... they may cause us to have by-elections later." Dr Mahathir said to the amusement of those present.

"I believe those who remain will get the support from all sides and those dropped will give their support because they (those dropped) realise that, in the past, they had the support and today it is their turn to give support (to the new ones)," he added.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that there were perhaps those who would not be happy and would be disappointed.

But he said this was a normal thing in politics because "we cannot expect to remain as candidates forever."

"I am confident that all will support candidates who have been selected."

To a question on how he would overcome the problem arising from unhappy aspirants who were not chosen, he said: "We will appeal to them to accept the chosen

candidates. It is not possible to satisfy everyone because there are many who want to be candidates."

He likened the situation of choosing candidates to the issuing of lorry licences.

"We have one licence but there are 10 who want it. Only one will get, the other nine will not be satisfied. So we increase the number to 10. There will be 100 who want and we can only give 10...90 will not be happy."

Dr Mahathir said this question of not being happy was "a problem that is really heavy for me."

"To satisfy everyone is not possible. I hope BN members will close ranks and remember that we are not fighting for an individual to become a *wakil rakyat* but for the setting up of a government.

Dr Mahathir said those who are candidates "should in fact be faceless... all should use the Barisan Nasional symbol."

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the possibility of Barisan Nasional candidates becoming complacent given their confidence in obtaining more than a two-third majority.

He said: "If there is complacency, this can be dangerous. In a general election, we cannot believe we can win easily, although others say so, all sorts of things can happen.

"I myself as a candidate who is used to winning, used to losing and to winning uncontested. I know we cannot predict the results of an election."

Asked whether there was a chance of a component party member withdrawing from the coalition in the 11th hour as Parti Bersatu Sabah did during the 1990 general election, Dr Mahathir said this was "very, very remote."

In a sombre tone, he said: "That was one of the blackest parts in the history of the alliance... that one party should withdraw after accepting to contest in an election together as the alliance party."

Dr Mahathir said the PBS was able to do that because it was allowed to use its own symbol.

"This time they (BN components) are allowed to use only one symbol, it is not possible for them to suddenly pull out

and veterans