

# Dr M: We won't make changes to line-up

By Manan Osman and Azran Aziz

KUALA KLawang (Negri Sembilan), Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional line-up for the general election was final and he would not entertain any requests to amend it.

He said there would be no compromise, unless fate intervened like the death of a proposed candidate.

"By right, there should not be any more change to the line-up. We will not entertain (requests for) changes now. The line-up is final," he said at a news conference after attending a meet-the-people session here.

Dr Mahathir said there was a possibility that incumbent Members of Parliament would be contesting State seats and vice versa, but this would not affect government programmes.

He said in the event of such changes (from parliamentary to State seat and vice versa), the BN had the mechanism to ensure continuity in the implementation of its programmes.

"We have the way and we can do it. It is not a problem ... changes occur in any Government but if there are changes, it is done not to disrupt programmes. We do good planning," he said.

The BN, which has 14 component parties, will contest in all the parliamentary and State seats. Nomination is on Saturday and polling is on April 24 and 25.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said although there appeared to be some disagreement among Opposition parties, they would co-operate with each other quietly.

"Pas will field its candidates in areas where DAP and MCA candidates are contesting to help the DAP. We know in the past that DAP fielded its candidate in Kota Baru to defeat the MCA candidate although the party knew it would not win there," he said.

"The co-operation will continue to exist although Pas has repeatedly denied it. It is just like 'you scratch my back, I scratch yours'," he said.

He said the pact would not affect BN's chances as the people were aware of Pas and DAP's strategies.

Dr Mahathir also said he was hurt by the unsubstantiated allegations levelled against him and his family by former Pas Youth vice-chairman Mohamad Sabu.

One of the accusations was that he had sold his land in Bukit Pinang, Kedah to the Government at RM70 per sq ft when in fact, the entire one hectare land was acquired for only RM8,000.

"In one of his *ceramah* at the Pas headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, he claimed that my daughter Marina drank liquor in London. But he never substantiated his claims.

"He knows that I cannot deny the allegation as I do not have proof. As far as I know, my daughter does not drink liquor. It is clear that Mohamad's intention is just

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to smear my name."

"I do not mind if he wants to stand against me in Kubang Pasu but do not use such unethical tactics. It is not proper for a person who is claiming to represent an Islamic party to do so," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Mohamad also said he would refer to him as Mahathir Laknatullah (condemned by God) when he dies.

"What right does he have to condemn me? These are the words of a person who claims to subscribe to Islamic teachings. They never stop spreading lies and bad-mouthing others," he said.

Asked about his plans to counter the allegations, he said he could only explain to the people.

"The people can make their judgment," he said.

On whether he would take legal action against Mohamad for making the allegations, he said: "For the time being, I cannot do anything. If I proceed, they will accuse me of misusing my power. They will get the foreign Press to criticise me."

He said even if there were provisions in the laws which allowed him to take action, he would only do so after the election.

Asked about former Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba's intention to contest if selected, he said it would be known tomorrow when the Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers announced the States' line-up.

He, however, welcomed Ghafar's willingness to help the BN in the election, saying that Ghafar was a former Umno leader and an Umno member.

He has the right to continue extending his service to the party, Dr Mahathir said.