

BN confident of

By A. Kathirasen

BUTTERWORTH, Sat. — Boosted by a strong show of support, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said the Barisan Nasional (BN) had an excellent chance of retaining control of the Penang State Government.

At the end of a two-day visit to the State where he addressed large crowds and met various people, the Prime Minister said the response of the people of Penang towards the BN was "very good".

Penang is the focus of this general election as the DAP is making its strongest bid ever to capture the State Government through its Tanjung Three project.

DAP secretary-general

Lim Kit Siang has said there would be no Tanjung Four and the party is going all out to win as many urban seats as possible by fielding candidates in 26 State constituencies.

Lim himself is trying to unseat Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon in the Tanjung Bunga State seat to underline his seriousness in wanting to form the next State Government and become Chief Minister.

Dr Mahathir said: "Our chances are very good and the response from the people here is very good. Last night there was an unusually big crowd at Tanjung Bunga and the people were in good spirits and very supportive. I think the chances for the BN are very good."

The Prime Minister was speaking to reporters after a meet-the-people session at Pasir Gebu, about 30km north of here. About 7,000 people attended the gathering in the stronghold of Pas.

Pasir Gebu is part of the Penaga State constituency where the BN's Azhar Ibrahim is facing Penang Pas commissioner Hamdan Abdul Rahman. The open space where the gathering was held is just a few metres from a Pas *pondok*. There are many Pas posters and banners in the area, including one with the words "This is Pas territory, Umno sorry-lah".

Dr Mahathir, in outlining the differences between the BN and the Opposition, said the Opposition had no pro-

gramme whatsoever and they talked about things that they could not possibly achieve, such as abolishing taxes.

He said the Opposition made all sorts of promises just to fish for votes. The BN, on the other hand, has clear-cut policies and pragmatic programmes to uplift the people and take the nation to greater heights of peace and prosperity.

On Lim, Dr Mahathir said he talked about the rule of law but he broke the law.

"How can he talk about the rule of law? He has no right. He breaks the law. He does not want to pay toll when he uses the road.

"Now what he is trying to do is frighten the people into voting for the DAP. He

retaining Penang

says there will be racial riots and that he will be arrested, unless of course, he becomes Chief Minister."

On the DAP fielding 10 Malay candidates in Penang for the first time to show it is multi-racial, Dr Mahathir replied:

"This, is just a show. Those candidates are nothing. One is a former Pas member who joined for the purpose of this election, another is a son of one of the members.

"The DAP can't even get candidates, you know. That is why their candidates contest in both State and parliamentary constituencies because they don't have enough candidates.

"Nobody wants to join them. But of course you can

get some people who have no principles to join because basically the DAP is still harping on Chinese chauvinism.

"The DAP is going around telling the Chinese hawkers that the Malays are now using Mercedes Benz cars. Why don't they say that to the rich Chinese? That is nothing to the rich Chinese who own such cars.

"On the other hand, Pas is trying to stir up anti-Chinese sentiments. We are the only ones who are trying to bring the different races together and we have succeeded. That is why in Malaysia, we have a peaceful and prosperous multi-racial society where people are happy and events such as those occurring in Bosnia do not take

place here."

Asked if he would serve a full term as Prime Minister upon re-election, Dr Mahathir smiled and said: "Well ... there is that possibility. If I am healthy and the people want me, why not?"

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir revealed the inconsistencies of Pas and its leaders who said they championed the cause of Islam but whose actions proved otherwise.

Quoting verses from the Quran, Dr Mahathir, to their applause, showed the crowd the differences in Pas' interpretations, actions and stated objectives.

He said while Umno was trying to unite the Muslims, Pas through its actions was

dividing them. As an example, he pointed out that Pas had built a mosque in Terengganu where non-Pas members were not allowed although they were Muslims.

The Prime Minister warned Muslims to be wary of Pas as its leaders interpreted the Quran to suit their political ambitions.

Dr Mahathir said by voting for Umno, Muslims would further strengthen moves by the Government to implement Islamic principles in a practical manner.

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Badawi who is MP for the area, Agriculture Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Shariff Omar and Azhar.