

# PM: Sabah polls crucial for BN

'Barisan must win  
so development  
continues in state'

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KOTA KINABALU: The coming Sabah elections are crucial because they will be the barometer for the future of the Barisan Nasional, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said everyone must make sure that Barisan succeeds in the elections so that development in Malaysia and Sabah would continue.

"You cannot disappoint our nation. Our country is our responsibility. We must win the elections," the Prime Minister told a large crowd at the Barisan Youth rally in Likas.

In an hour-long speech seen by Sabah politicians as setting the tone for state elections which must be called by March 18, Dr Mahathir said the Barisan coalition was entering an election without fighting one another.

He likened the situation in Sabah to that in the peninsula, where there were many component parties and some parties would not be fielding any candidates.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Barisan chairman, said even if a party did not have a candidate it should support other component parties.

"We must remember in politics individual interest is not important but the party is," he said, adding that the Barisan Nasional must form the government and it would be pointless for an individual to win if his party lost.

He said Barisan was the only coalition party in the world formed well before elections, unlike coalitions elsewhere which were formed after elections as "marriages of convenience."

Such co-operation after elections resulted in a government having to focus on politics to stay in power instead of concentrating on development, he added.

On the failures of previous Sabah governments, Dr Mahathir said the state had changed many governments because those who entered politics did not understand why they were in politics.

"They believed that the reward of entering politics and winning was the wealth of Sabah which could go into their pockets.

"I feel sad that when PBS (Parti Bersatu Sabah) ruled the state, all the state's wealth was swallowed," he said.