

# MIC likely to get the seat, says Mahathir

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By **Regina William**  
wregina@thesundaily.com

**GURUN, Fri:** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says the Barisan Nasional will likely field an MIC candidate to contest the Lunas state constituency in the coming by-election.

The Prime Minister, who is the BN chairman, said un-

less the MIC does not want the seat, then it will be offered to other parties in the coalition.

Asked if the BN was prepared, he said: "We are prepared. Many are interested."

He said he will discuss with MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu to determine the candidate.

Mahathir was speaking to reporters after officiating a smart partnership program-

me organised by the Kedah government.

The seat became vacant when its two-term state assemblyman Dr Joe Fernandez was shot dead by a gunman last Saturday while on his way home from his clinic in Jalan Kulim.

Mahathir's statement puts an end to speculation on whether the MIC will be given the opportunity to retain the seat.

Even Kedah Mentri Besar Datuk Syed Razak Syed Zain had commented several days ago that there was no guarantee that the BN will field a candidate from MIC despite it being a traditional MIC seat.

The voters comprises 43% Malays, 37% Chinese and Indians make up 19%.

Also present at the function were Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Syed Razak.