

PM told of BN line-up for Sarawak elections

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SEPANG, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he has been officially informed of the Barisan Nasional line-up for the Sarawak elections by the Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud on Tuesday.

The dissolution date of the state legislative assembly to pave way for the elections will be known on Monday, Abdul Taib said today.

He said he will meet Yang Dipertua Negri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin on Monday to inform him of the date.

However, when asked to comment on this, Mahathir said: "I only read in the newspapers today that it will be decided on Sept 3 ... I am a newspaper reader and I get a lot of information from the newspaper."

However, he said: "You can't go on for ever, his (Abdul Taib's) term is going to expire and they will need to have an election. The time and place for elections will be decided by the Election Commission, not by BN."

When asked to comment on the arrest of 16 people holding prayers led by two imams, he said since the existence of a political party, Muslims in this country have been divided.

"They have different religious beliefs and faith and these have also created extremists who want to topple the government."

Police yesterday arrested 16 people for holding separate *Isyak* prayers led by two imams at the Ar-Rahman mosque in Lembah Pantai, just outside Universiti Malaya last night.

The government is sad-

dened over the incident, Mahathir said.

He does not think students are interested in getting involved in things that are against Islam.

"But there are certain politicians who always instigate students and expect their support after they leave the university."

The politicians, he said, never think about race or religious issues, or the country - they only think about winning the elections.

Mahathir said when he was a child, there were no such things as Malays being divided, having two imams in a mosque or having opposing beliefs.

"From 1959, the issue of calling Muslims *kafir* (infidel) had already started and they did this not because of religion but because of politics."