

# No reason for snap polls: PM

Dr M questions opposition's fixation with election

SUN, 18 DEC 2001

By **R. Manirajan**  
and **Eileen Ng**

**PUTRAJAYA, Mon:** The prime minister dismissed speculation yesterday that an early general election will be called next year, just three years into the Barisan Nasional's five-year term ending in 2004.

"I wouldn't know ... it depends," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said when asked if there was any possibility for a snap election next year.

He was asked to comment on claims by leaders of certain opposition parties as well as financial analysts that the general election will be called a year early.

They cited the Budget 2002 perks given to civil servants and the political developments in the country as reasons for a snap polls.

DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang had said recently that the BN-led government will be using the Sept 11 attack on the US and the war in Afghanistan as part of a terror-election campaign.

He said the BN would also capitalise on PAS's intention to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia.

Mahathir dismissed the speculation, and said he could not understand why opposition parties kept harping on the issue when they claim the country's economy is doing badly.

"If the economy is not doing well, why should the

government call for an early election?" he asked.

"Normally, the government calls for an election when it is going to win, when the situation in the country is very good.

"So, are they admitting the situation in the country is good and not as they claim?"

Speaking to reporters after the Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house in his official residence in Seri Perdana, he also questioned the opposition's fixation with the election.

"We (the government) take elections very seriously ... we don't just call for an election just because you are in a position to win," he said.

On Malaysian Airports Holding Berhad's (MAHB)

intention to dispose of Sepang International Circuit (SIC) to Petronas, he said the government's primary concern was that the circuit is well utilised and managed.

Dismissing suggestions that the move was a bailout, he said: "The government has not really made any decision whether to give it to Petronas or to other people.

"We have to know what they want to use the circuit for. Obviously, it is for Formula One races but it is only held once a year.

"We can't build a circuit that size without using it fully, although we must admit the advertising value of F1 is about five to six times the cost of building the circuit."