

# Looking good

SUN 14 JAN 2002

## BN's chances bright with Opposition having problems, says Dr M

LANGKAWI, Sun: Barisan Nasional's chances of retaining the Indera Kayangan state seat in Perlis are good, given the problems besetting the Opposition, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said many Parti Keadilan Nasional members have abandoned the party, which has also been affected by the withdrawal of the DAP from the opposition coalition.

"Members of the party are also not dedicated to the struggle and, as such, it gets cracked and broken easily I am convinced this is a sign that Keadilan will eventually just disintegrate," he said.

The contest for the state seat is a straight fight between Barisan Nasional's Ooi Ah Lan, 59, and Keadilan's Khoo Yang Chang, 60.

Mahathir, who arrived here yesterday, was accompanied by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain on a tour of development projects in Langkawi.

He was asked to comment on the move by Keadilan's Indera Kayan-

gan state by-election director to join Umno together with 68 other party leaders yesterday.

According to press reports, the deputy chairman of the Perlis Keadilan liaison body, Mej (R) Mohamed Shariff Abdul Razak, left the party together with several of his colleagues alleging that Keadilan's leadership at the federal level had totally disregarded the views of the party state leaders in the selection of the by-election candidate.

Another development that has affected Keadilan badly is DAP's withdrawal from the opposition alliance, because of its refusal to be associated with PAS's Islamic state issue.

DAP has forbidden its members from taking

# Opposition running out of ideas, says Mahathir

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part in the by-election campaign even in their individual capacity.

Asked whether events involving the Opposition were staged, Mahathir said: "We never try to get out of situations by saying that this and that have been staged . . . we acknowledge whatever is true as the truth, and whatever is untrue as untruth.

"It appears as if PAS and

Keadilan do not have reasonable grounds regarding the arms heist (in Sauk). Is it reasonable to believe that the arms heist is staged, but not the other aspects? How can we say it is staged when the weapons have been used to commit murder?"

Mahathir said the Opposition was running out of ideas and had resorted to bringing up a fatal incident to win votes.

Keadilan Youth vice head

Mohamed Zahid Mohamed Arip raised the issue of the death of Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim's young son during the by-election campaign, saying it was God's way of punishing him.

"It is our culture to pay our respects when a death occurs. Even if it is our enemy who is bereaved, we shouldn't say it serves him right," Mahathir said.

In **JELI**, Umno informa-

tion chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said Keadilan is on the brink of collapse as many of its members have lost their faith in the party.

He said more defections are expected to take place.

"More people who had joined the opposition party want to come to Umno, but they are shy . . . hopefully, they will lose their shyness soon," he said. - Bernama

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