

PM: I'LL NOT CONTEST

STAR 14 SEP 2002

'But I will ensure people choose BN in next election'

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ALOR STAR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will not seek re-election at the next general election, scheduled for 2004.

The Prime Minister and MP for Kubang Pasu announced this at a meet-the-people session at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College, here, yesterday.

Dr Mahathir expressed the hope, however, that the people would not make any mistake when choosing the next government at the election.

"Although I will not be contesting in the next election, it is my responsibility to correct all mistakes and guide the people so that they will not be cheated and will choose the Barisan Nasional," he told thousands of people at the session.

Later when asked to elaborate on his statement after opening the Asian Composites Manufacturing Sdn Bhd facility in Bukit Kayu Hitam, Dr Mahathir reaffirmed it.

"That is unless I am forced to go (and contest). But I think I want to retire cleanly and not be involved in anything after my retirement."

On whether he had relayed his intention to

the Umno supreme council, he said he had not done so.

"But I think, the supreme council also expects me to step down sometime. I can't be here forever," he added.

Dr Mahathir has been the MP for Kubang Pasu since 1974.

In an emotional episode that stunned the nation at the Umno general assembly in June, the Prime Minister and party president had said he would relinquish all party posts.

Subsequently, he announced that he would hand over the premiership to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and relinquish all party and government posts by October 2003, after Kuala Lumpur hosts the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that although the people had the power to choose in a country that practised democracy, it was sad there were parties that abused the system.

Referring to the recent Anak Bukit and Pendang by-elections, he said an election was held for those living in a particular constituency and not for voters from outside the area.

"That is why the Government designated

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Dr M: Be smart and vote in right govt

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certain areas as election areas, rather than making Malaysia a single election area," he said.

The Prime Minister said the people should not make any mistake in an election because they would have to face the consequences later, adding that they had to be smart in choosing the right people to lead a government that could bring development to the nation.

Taking a swipe at PAS, Dr Mahathir said he would continue to warn the people about the lies spread by that party.

He alleged that the opposition party had identified certain constituencies that it hoped could help in its quest to capture the Kedah government, after Kelantan and Terengganu.

"But they want to do it by shrewdly moving voters from other areas to the constituencies," Dr Mahathir said.

"The result of the recent Anak Bukit by-election clearly shows how PAS manipulated the transfer of voters.

"Our check shows PAS had moved more than 2,000 outsiders as voters into Anak Bukit," he said.

"What they did was by cheating. Going by the law, they win. But it was wrong in Islam. As such, the candidate who won the seat is living on illegal money," Dr Mahathir said.