

# Sabah may wait-until Dr M steps down to hold polls

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah is mulling the possibility of holding its state election only after October in view of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's wish that elections be held after he steps down as Prime Minister.

"The final decision on the election dates will be done in consultation with the leadership," Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman told reporters here yesterday on his return from Kuala Lumpur where he attended the Umno general assembly.

In a recent interview with *Mingguan Malaysia*, Dr Mahathir said he hoped elections would be held only after his resignation.

Asked if he preferred that the Sabah election be held simultaneously with the general election or on its own, Musa said it was not a problem either way.

"We will leave that to the leadership to decide."

The state election is due by March next year.

Most of the nine Barisan parties in the state have begun preparations, with some publicly staking their claim to contest in the polls.

The number of state seats will be increased from 48 to 60. Parliamentary constituencies will go up from 20 to 25 following the delineation exercise.

With the Parti Bersatu Sabah's return to Barisan last year, there is little opposition in Sabah as parties like PAS, Parti Keadilan Nasional and DAP have little influence in the state.