

‘Value the right to vote’

# Back the people you know: Dr. M

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs.**  
— Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad advised the five million voters tonight to back the National Front which they had come to know well rather than gamble on other parties.

He said: “I hope the voters will choose the Government they have known for the past 21 years — the National Front Government.

“It is far better to accept what you know than to gamble with what you are not sure of. Your fate is in your hands.”

The Deputy Prime Minister was speaking over Radio Malaysia 48 hours before the nation goes to the polls.

He said a general election on the surface seemed a normal affair which must be held at

least once in five years but it was, in fact, “a very special thing”.

In many countries now, general elections were no longer held or, if held, there was no more freedom of choice, so that 100 per cent of the candidates elected came from the ruling party.

As free elections were becoming a rarity, it was important that the people valued their right to vote, he said.

“Your right to vote exists because the party which has ruled Malaysia since independence 21 years ago, is democratic and is led by people who believe firmly in democracy as the basis of their politics,” he said.

“Their faith in demo-

# 'Opposition cannot fulfil promises'

## ★ From Page One

cracy is clearly evident in their own party and also in the manner in which they administer the nation."

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said even though the position of these leaders might be threatened and their power taken away from them, they were still prepared to face the process of democracy.

He said: "The parties which make up the Government have been tested as to their faith in democracy and they have come through with flying colours.

"The acid test of this faith came with the May 13 affair."

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir added: "Today because the National Front Government rules the country and has faith in democracy we are again witnessing a general election in which the people can vote freely.

"The National Front is once again seeking the mandate from the people in order to continue with its administration."

## Principles

The Front, the Deputy Prime Minister said, was fielding sufficient candidates to form a Government. Other parties were putting up candidates only

sufficient to form an opposition.

"Although these parties can only become the opposition they are not hesitant in making all sorts of promises as if they are going to form the Central Government," he added.

He said: "The DAP, for example, promises that it would cut down corruption among Government employees. It says that under the National Front Government \$9 million was lost due to corruption.

"If what it says is true, then this money was lost at the time when the DAP was the opposition party. How then can the DAP as an opposition party after this election prevent corruption from taking place when it was not able to do so before?"

In fact, he added, whenever Pas succeeded in setting up a State Government the first thing it did was divide the spoils.

He added that the reduction in corruption in this country was due to the efforts of the National Front and not that of the opposition.

As for Pas, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said it was as usual promising to set up a welfare State in accordance with Islamic principles.

He added that the people of Kelantan gave Pas 19 years to rule the State but it failed to create the welfare State it had promised.

"Pas knows quite well that it will never be able to form the new Central Government by itself but this

has not prevented it from again making the same promises."

Citing an example, he said that when Pas gained power in Trengganu in 1969 the tussle was for the post of Mentri Besar. Everyone wanted to be the Mentri Besar.

After the Mentri Besar had been chosen there continued to be disputes until the Pas Government in Trengganu collapsed and was replaced by the Alliance, he said.

"I would not elaborate on what happened in Kelantan. The division of spoils in Kelantan went on quietly until some of the leaders decided to stop it. As a result there was a quarrel and Pas broke up.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir also touched on his book "The Malay Dilemma" and said it had been turned into a campaign issue by Pas.

The speakers of Pas, he added, said that in his book he had stated that "as long as the Malays are Muslims -- for so long will they remain backward."

He added that when Pas was challenged to swear that such words were in his book, it refused to accept the challenge. Instead, it proposed a debate and suggested that the Government lift the ban on the book for three hours.

The suggestion that the book should be legalised for three hours, he added, revealed Pas' disregard for the laws of the country.

"For them what is illegal can be made legal with ease and then with equal ease be made illegal again."