

No simultaneous elections, says PM

# DR M: I'LL SURPRISE YOU YET

PM: There's no hurry

**DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said there is no great hurry to appoint a Deputy Prime Minister.

"We will have one (a Deputy Prime Minister) when we have one," he told a Press conference.

Dr Mahathir said it was important to fill the post "but it is not a matter of life and death."

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between now and April 1987."

Dr Mahathir said a surprise was in store for those who were speculating on the election date.

"Newspapers and opposition politicians seem to have worked out when the election will be held," he told a Press conference at the end of his two-day visit to Sarawak.

"Some say it will not be in the fasting month but during the school holidays... you will be surprised," he said.

Asked if it was a strategy to keep opposition parties unprepared, Dr Mahathir said:

"If we tell, it will not be a strategy anymore."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said he would wind-up his nation-wide tour with a visit to Labuan next week.

He said his visit to Sarawak was part of his series of tours to meet Barisan leaders to assess their strength in preparation for the general election.

However, he said he would skip Sabah because it was having its elections "and it is not the time to visit the State now."

The Prime Minister said that during his visits to the States, he had the opportunity to meet the people and explain the country's economic situation.

Asked if his assessment had

made it easier for him to fix an election date, Dr Mahathir said:

"I know the situation better now. Whether it's easier or not, I cannot say."

On whether the general election would be held simultaneously with the Sabah elections scheduled for May 5 and 6, Dr Mahathir said:

"We cannot fix it together. (For instance) Sarawak had an election two years ago. It would be a waste of money to have an election here two years later."

"We cannot have simultaneous elections. However, where the Peninsular is concerned, we will have simultaneous State and federal elections," he said.

On the Sabah elections, Dr Mahathir reiterated that the Barisan Nasional would support Berjaya, its sole representative in the State.

However, he could not say if he would visit the State to campaign for Berjaya.

"We are only involved with one party. If there is need for help, we will go. If there is no need, we won't," he said.

Asked if he was still hopeful after Berjaya's performance in the last elections where it won only six out of 48 seats, Dr Mahathir replied:

"What's wrong with Berjaya's performance? It was not Berjaya's performance. It was other people's performance."

To a question if he was hopeful that the Sabah Formula was still workable, Dr Mahathir quoted a saying from English poet Alexander Pope: "Hope springs eternal in the human breast."

On PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan's statement yesterday that the party would apply to join the Barisan after the elections, Dr Mahathir said:

"They have a right to apply. It is our right to consider (their application.)"

"We consider all applications. If anyone is willing to work with us, we will see if it is worthwhile to accept."

He also declined to say if a PBS victory in the elections would be a criteria for its acceptance.

"When we come to it, we will think about it," he said.

By KALIMULLAH HASSAN and T. SELVA

**KUCHING, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today that the general election will not be held simultaneously with the Sabah elections.

He said that although the Barisan Nasional was ready to face an election anytime, "the only thing I'm sure about is that the elections will be held