

PM: Barisan will retain its two-thirds majority

STAR 19 JUL 1986

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad predicted today the Barisan Nasional will retain its two-thirds majority in Parliament and control of all the State Governments in the general election.

The Prime Minister and Barisan chairman also said the election was being held now because "the speculations about it are affecting our running of the country."

He said the Barisan would be campaigning on the slogan *Tradisi Membela Rakyat* (Tradition of Championing the People).

He was speaking at a Press conference at the Barisan headquarters where he announced that Parliament would be dissolved tomorrow, paving

the way for the election.

He had earlier chaired a two-hour meeting of the coalition's supreme council. This morning, Dr Mahathir — who is also Umno president — chaired a meeting of the party's supreme council.

Dr Mahathir said the date of dissolution was a "suitable one because we think we will have a good victory for the Barisan."

"We have some secret reasons for it," he said.

He also told reporters that:

- THERE were no major issues facing the coalition;
- HAMIM had been accepted, in principle, into the Barisan; and
- THE Opposition pact led by PAS would be the party's own graveyard.

Dr Mahathir said the Barisan could perform "as well as the last election, if not better." The Barisan retained control of all the State Assemblies and won 132 parliamentary seats in the 1982 election.

He said the Barisan's confidence was based on the fact that the "people want stability, a strong government which can run the country efficiently."

"We think we are going to win and are quite definite of getting two-thirds and more," he said.

Asked if the Barisan could lose some seats, he said: "We could lose a few seats. In an election anything can happen."

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BARISAN NOT FACING ANY MAJOR ISSUES: PM

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Dr Mahathir said the speculations on the election had prevented the Government from running the country effectively.

"Until this election is over we can't do anything. It is a hindrance. We have to get it out of the way.

"We can't have people talking and speculating about the election, depressing the stock market in anticipation of an election. We want to settle it once and for all," he said.

He also said the Barisan decided to hold an election now because it felt it could win.

Asked if there were any major issues facing the Barisan, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know of any major issues but the Opposition would like to make a lot of things major issues.

"The country wants stability and independence to make decisions free from outside interference. These are the major issues."

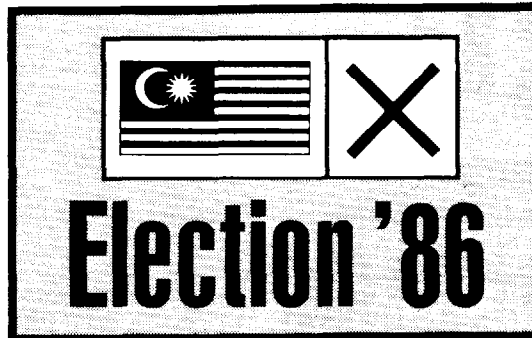
On the allocation of seats, he said the Barisan Supreme Council had generally resolved the matter but there were a few points which still had to be discussed.

He said the seats were allocated based on fairness and factors like racial make-up of an area.

"The popularity of the component parties and the service provided have all been taken into account," he said.

He said each component party would submit to him the names of the candidates after "we have divided the seats and areas."

He will review their names in his capacity as



Barisan chairman "as I have been given mandate to do so."

Dr Mahathir said the Barisan was also confident of retaining the east coast States.

"We're very strong. We are not afraid in the east coast, west coast, Sabah or Sarawak.

"We believe we can win

at both Parliament and State levels," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the manifesto had been agreed on and it outlined the coalition's aspirations and promises.

On the slogan, he said "this means the Barisan has a tradition of championing the people of all communities.

"So long as they are our rakyat, we will look after them."

Asked if the absence of those who are performing the haj would be exploited by the Opposition especially PAS to disrupt the election, he said:

"In any election, some people cannot vote. It is not a factor in deciding the election date."

Dr Mahathir also said the Umno general assembly, scheduled to begin on July 31, has been postponed because of the general election.

He pointed out that the party had until the end of December to hold the assembly, as specified in its constitution.

On the Barisan's previous *Bersih, Cekap Amanah* election slogan, he said it had not been dropped.

"Each time we have an election we have a new

slogan reflective of the prevailing situation. As far as the Government is concerned, we still practise the concept of a clean, efficient and trustworthy government.

He stressed that this did not mean that the old one was not successful.

"The *Bersih, Cekap, Amanah* concept was successful in bringing to the surface some of the misdeeds of the past.

"But people confuse this (exposing misdeeds) with lack of *bersih, cekap, amanah*. That's their business. The dirt was lying there before and we flushed it out in our efforts to achieve our objectives. The people see the dirt and they say we are dirty when it was there before."

Dr Mahathir also said he hoped to visit as many States as possible during the campaigning.