

ELECTIONS ON THEIR MIND

5/17/6/70

By Wong Chun Wai

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Umno Supreme Council discussed various matters related to the general election today and for the first time, talked about the possible dates for it.

The supreme council members talked about party preparations for the polls and the second round of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's pre-election nationwide tour which kicks off tomorrow.

"We discussed the dates but we will not disclose them here. But the election can be held anytime," the party president said after the three-hour meeting.

The council also assessed the party's strength, with Dr Mahathir saying he was satisfied with it. "Umno is now ready for the elections," he said.

Dr Mahathir said his nationwide tour, to explain various political issues to the people and Umno division leaders, would start with the Federal Territory.

He will stop in Lembah Pantai here where the Parti Semangat 46 is said to be actively campaigning to capture the parliamentary seat. (There

has been speculation that Semangat Federal Territory chief Marina Yusoff has been picked to contest the seat.)

Dr Mahathir will then go to Besut in Terengganu on Monday, followed by Jelebu in Negri Sembilan.

The Besut seat is held by Semangat supreme council member Datuk

Haji Zakaria Haji Abdul Rahman while Jelebu is represented by Semangat deputy president Datuk Rais Yatim.

Dr Mahathir said his tour, to stretch over a month, would end on July 15.

The Prime Minister went on his first pre-election tour, which was or-

ganised by the Umno Youth, in April.

This time, the tour is being organised by Umno, which is also organising a separate tour for deputy president Abdul Ghafar Baba.

Dr Mahathir said he would tell the people how civil servants had been intimidated and threatened by opposition leaders.

He said he would also explain to the people the fight to retain the country's Generalised System of Preferences privileges and the involvement of opposition leaders in the MTUC.

"I will explain how Semangat and DAP leaders in MTUC are trying to use it for their selfish gains to the extent of being willing to gamble with the livelihood of workers in the GSP issue," he said.

Dr Mahathir said party vice-president Anwar Ibrahim also briefed the meeting on the new Education Bill.

"There has been some dissatisfaction (with the provisions) and this has to be resolved before the bill can be tabled in Parliament," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the council also discussed preparations for the Kuala Linggi and Kijal by-elections and felt that the Barisan Nasional would retain the seats.