

REASON FOR OBSERVERS

PM tells of possible plot to cause trouble

By M. Veera Pandiyan

MASJID TANAH, Tues. — The Government decided to invite Commonwealth observers for the coming general election to foil a possible plot to create trouble if the opposition lost, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

The Prime Minister said that bringing in the observers would allow outsiders to see how opposition parties behaved.

"The opposition parties would want to reject the observers, but because they do not have an excuse, they are forced to accept them," he told reporters after meeting Umno election workers at the Malaysian Maritime Academy in Kuala Linggi, near here.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had reason to believe that certain people were trying to duplicate the methods that were used in the Philippines to bring down Ferdinand Marcos.

He said an election watch

group was formed in the Philippines and after the results were announced, the group branded the elections a fraud.

"This resulted in riots and chaos. But that was in the Philippines, not Malaysia. And there is no President Marcos here. We are a free and democratic country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Govern-

ment was worried about the activities of the Election Watch because its members had a record of discrediting the country.

"They are jealous of the Government and angry because one of their friends was removed from the Government.

"All they want is revenge," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the formation of Election Watch, which is headed by former Lord President Tun Suffian Hashim, could be part of the plan.

"The Election Watch may later declare there was cheating and this may lead to riots.

"So now we want foreigners to come as observers. With the observers present they would not dare to make such allegations," he said.

Asked about his meeting with Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang yesterday on the observers, Dr Mahathir said the team would only watch the process of the general election and ensure that it was conducted fairly.

He said they would not be involved in any political activity or accept representations or memorandums from any party.

"The question is, will the polls

be held fairly. That is the only thing. Whatever facilities they need in order to observe, we will give," he said.

He said he disagreed with several conditions suggested by Mr Lim, such as asking the observers to check old cases and to enable political parties to make representations.

However, he agreed the observers should be from Commonwealth countries which practised parliamentary democracy: "All the countries represented would be democracies with multi-party systems."

Dr Mahathir said Mr Lim wanted four basic, or "FFCH," principles to be followed in the elections.

"He said FFCH stood for Fair, Free, Clean and Honest. I agreed with him.

"We have held fair, free, clean and honest elections the past eight times."

Dr Mahathir, who was here for a one-day visit on the final leg of his nationwide tour, performed the ground-breaking for the Kuala Linggi bridge.

The \$12 million bridge will link Kuala Linggi in Malacca and Tanjung Agas in Negri Sembilan.