

Old struggle has been forgotten: PM

By AZAM ARIS

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THE concept of multi-racial parties strongly professed by Alliance and Barisan Nasional, which have both governed the country since independence in 1957, need to be revived as new party leaders have forgotten the struggle of their forefathers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said many young and aspiring political leaders want to contest in the general election as party candidates and not as representatives of the coalition party, Barisan Nasional (BN).

Speaking at a press conference after holding a meeting with state BN leaders in Kuala Terengganu yesterday evening, he said they are more interested in getting elected as candidates of their respective parties.

"Most of the young leaders were born after the days of Alliance. They did not know the real concept of Alliance and BN, how the party was formed and what benefits it brings to the people.

"They joined their respective parties to stand for election. It is more important for them to be a candidate than to ensure BN victory in the coming election," he said.

Nevertheless, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir is satisfied with the outcome of his state visits as party leaders have managed to get the message to the party members.

Also present at the meeting were Gera-

kan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad and Information Minister Datuk Mohamad Rahmat.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is also the chairman of BN, said supporters of the coalition party should support its candidates irrespective of which constituent party he or she represents.

He also said that in the coming elections, BN will field a mixture of new and old faces.

"There is no such thing as an ideal candidate for a particular constituency. We cannot satisfy everybody but I hope those chosen will be supported by party members of other coalition parties," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the election date has not been fixed, adding that the opposition has been predicting the date for the last three years.

Referring to the Gulf crisis, he said he has yet to contact Iraqi President Saddam Hussein over the fate of Malaysians stranded in Kuwait and Iraq.

He hoped that the problem will be resolved amicably and that Iraq will not use Malaysians and other foreigners as hostages if the crisis escalates.