

Dr M: I don't know yet when polls will be held

MALACCA, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he himself does not know yet when the next general election will be held.

He said he was surprised over rumours that Parliament would be dissolved soon.

"According to one source, Parliament would be dissolved today and elections would be held on Sept 15, and on Sept 16 one person would be sworn in as the Prime Minister," he said when asked by reporters to comment on speculation that the general election would be held soon.

"I do not know about this. Maybe this person knows more than me."

Dr Mahathir said he had not cancelled his scheduled visit to South Korea next week. He said he also planned to go on another series of visits to the various states to meet Barisan Nasional leaders and supporters.

He said he had not decided whether or not to attend the United Nations General Assembly after his South Korean trip. This would depend on his work schedules.

"Naturally, I want to pay more heed to the problems in the country than attend to matters abroad," he said.

"However, I have no plans to cancel my trip to South Korea. When I return I would continue with my duties as leader of the party.

"In short, I will not rest. We shall see who will last longer."

He said the people should not speculate that the elections were going to be held just because he was spending more time in the country.

He said he was not worried that his tight schedule of visits to the states would affect his health.

"I take good care. My wife is also always with

me and she is a doctor," he said, pointing to Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali.

He said the series of visits to the states by top Barisan leaders had not affected productivity in the civil service and private sector.

"The investors are continuing to pour in, companies are reporting high profits," he said.

"For example, Sime Darby chalked up \$600 million in profits and this year the country may record a double-digit growth rate."

Speaking to Barisan component party members and supporters at the Air Keroh Expo Centre near here, Dr Mahathir said Semangat 46 leader Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was making all kinds of promises to his allies in the Opposition because he was worried that his party would be "finished" after the next general election.

He said Tengku Razaleigh feared that his party would face the same fate as Parti Negara and the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) formed by Umno leaders who broke away from the party.

Dr Mahathir said Tengku Razaleigh was using PAS and DAP for his own political interests because Semangat 46 was weak.

He urged Barisan supporters to work towards eliminating Semangat 46 in the next elections.

Dr Mahathir also challenged the DAP today to prove its allegations that there was corruption in the state government.

"But we believe that the allegations are politically motivated just to win votes," he said, apparently referring to Kota Melaka MP Lim Guan Eng's recent police report that a company in which a state exco member was director and shareholder had been given 2.8ha of housing land.