

PM: NO CHANGE IN SEAT QUOTA FOR BN PARTIES

By Harpajan Singh. (P)

BANDAR MU'ADZAM SHAH, Thurs. — Barisan Nasional component parties will get to contest the same number of seats in the next general election as in the previous one, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"The Barisan Nasional parties have agreed that there will be no change in the quota of seats allocated to them in the 1986 election," the Prime Minister and Barisan chairman said. "However, we have not decided which seats will be allocated to which party."

Regarding the three new parliamentary constituencies in Sarawak, Dr Mahathir said a decision on which party would get to contest them would be made after his tour of Sabah and Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir said he hoped to visit the two states — as part of another nationwide tour — by the end of the month after his return from Seoul.

Speaking to reporters after a close-door meeting with state Barisan leaders here, Dr Mahathir said that all the parties would contest under the Barisan banner and would use a common manifesto during the general election.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said he had not received any official request from any Barisan party in Sabah to contest under its own banner.

"In the peninsula, there is no problem but in Sabah and Sarawak, the situation is a little extraordinary," he said. "We will look at the situation thoroughly if there is a request."

In reply to another question, Dr Mahathir said he might call for a general election half way through his third round of nationwide tour.

"If I feel that it's the best time then, I will call for the election even half way through the series of visits," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that he might not attend

the United Nations general assembly beginning on Sept 18.

"I wanted to go at first as I thought that it was only going to be a week. But now I am told that there are a number of things to discuss and the conference is being stretched to two weeks. Two weeks is a long time for me to be away and it will affect my plans to go round meeting the people," he said.

"The general election might just be held while I am still there," Dr Mahathir said in jest. "We are reconsidering whether I should go (to the UN general assembly) personally since it is going to take a long time."

Dr Mahathir said his next nationwide tour would be to meet groups like associations or bodies, besides petty traders and hawkers, to explain important issues to them and to take a look at preparations for the election.

Dr Mahathir felt that another tour was needed

to explain certain points to the people again, besides new issues like the PAS support for the DAP.

Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with his second round of the nationwide pre-election tour which ended in Pahang today, saying that the BN party were united and strong under a spirit of solidarity.

He said from his two previous tours he found that there was not much lobbying for seats.

He said that from the recent visit and explanation by Barisan leaders, the members had realised that what was important was the victory of the party as a whole.

Also present were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, vice-president Datuk Lim Ah Lek, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Mohamed Khalil Yaacob and Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat.