

DR M: BN PREPARED FOR STRAIGHT FIGHTS

By Paul Gabriel

ALOR STAR, Thurs. — The Barisan Nasional is well-prepared to take on the Opposition in straight fights in the next general election, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the Barisan would fight the Opposition's electoral pact and continue to retain its two-thirds majority in Parliament.

He said the Barisan was prepared to meet anyone from any opposition party

in straight fights for parliamentary seats.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan chairman, added that PAS, DAP and Semangat 46 were now "pushing each other" to face the Barisan.

"In fact, if there is any constituency that should rightly be contested by both PAS and DAP, and PAS doesn't, it only means that PAS has surrendered to the DAP's whims."

He said PAS leaders were "simply selling" seats to the DAP and Semangat.

"It seems they (PAS) will even work with the devil just to win the elections ... this is a far cry from the original aims and intentions of its founder members."

He said that according to Semangat president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, PAS would surrender all parliamentary constituencies it had lost in 1986 to his party.

Dr Mahathir said Semangat wanted to contest 60 Malay-majority parliamentary seats "though it was a minority party in

the coalition." This left only 33 Malay-majority seats for PAS to contest.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a two-day visit to Kedah, was speaking to reporters after attending the 19th anniversary celebrations of the National Padi and Rice Board at Sekolah Menengah Batu 20, in Mengat Dewa, Kubang Pasu.

Asked whether the opposition electoral pact to prevent the splitting of votes could cause the Barisan to lose the seats it won with slim majorities in 1986, Dr Mahathir said:

"We'll see if they can win ... but I believe we will get back the two-thirds."

On when the election would be held, Dr Mahathir said: "This is very important. In my opinion, if it is not held this month, it will be in October, if not, in November."

"I don't think an election can be held in December because of the wet spell then, maybe in January, or February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September or the latest by October."

S 21 SEP 1986