

PM: SHORT CAMPAIGN WILL PREVENT TENSION

By S.B. Lim and A.R. Amiruddin

PENANG, Sun. — The general election campaigning period has been shortened to 10 days to prevent any tension, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"If the campaigning period for the general election is too long, it will create tension like the elections in 1969.

"The sooner the elections are held the better. It is just a few days short of the 14-day period in previous elections," the

Prime Minister said.

He added that despite their complaints, the opposition had actually been campaigning since 1987.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said he would meet Barisan leaders tomorrow to finalise the list of candidates.

He said PPP leaders, however, would not be attending the meeting as the party had indicated that it would not be contesting any seat.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after

meeting representatives of the Umno Balik Pulau division here.

He did not disclose the purpose of his visit but said that the problem was an internal party matter.

"The matter is resolved ... Umno is a disciplined party," he added.

It is understood that the meeting was over the nomination of Deputy Health Minister Senator Farid Ariffin as candidate for the constituency.

On claims by Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah that the opposition had not been

given fair coverage in the mass media, Dr Mahathir said *Harakah* and *Rocket* (party papers of PAS and DAP respectively) had printed nothing other than articles condemning the Government.

He also said that Tengku Razaleigh's legal suit was an attempt to "gag my mouth."

"Even when they are not in power, they are trying to gag my mouth. What more if the opposition is in power. They may even send me to jail, but they have not won yet," he added.