

BN confident of being returned in Kelantan

KOTA BARU, Thurs. — The Barisan Nasional does not consider any constituency in Kelantan as an Opposition stronghold and is confident of being returned to power in the State in the next general election, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight.

Replying to a question about so-called Pas strongholds, he said: "In the last elections it was predicted that the BN would only win 19 State seats in Kelantan, and some said 17. But we managed to win 29 seats."

Speaking to reporters at the end of his visit to Pasir Mas before his departure to Kuala Lumpur, Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the preparations made by the BN in Kelantan.

Judging from the response from the people during his visit and the crossover of more than 1,000 Pas members to Umno earlier today, Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that the party would do well.

Earlier in Pasir Mas, he said non-Muslims and multinational companies had

accepted Umno-initiated economic and academic institutions but Pas had continued to discredit them for no apparent reason.

The signing of a loan agreement by a multinational company — Shell MDS (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd — with Bank Islam recently was proof of the confidence of non-Muslims in the bank, the Prime Minister said.

On June 13, Bank Islam raised a \$125 million financing facility for Shell based on the debt financing method of Al-Bai Bithaman Ajil (deferred payment sale).

Dr Mahathir said other Islamic programmes mooted by Umno included the International Islamic University and Lembaga Urusan Tabung Haji (Tabung Haji).

With these institutions already promoting Islamic values and principles, Pas still persists in branding Umno as unIslamic, Dr Mahathir said when addressing a gathering at the Pasir Mas mini-stadium here this evening.

About 10,000 people attended the gathering in a

show of support for Umno and Dr Mahathir, its president.

The Prime Minister said that even Muslim countries in the Middle East had sent delegations to study the Islamic banking concept. This is proof that these institutions have attracted the attention of not only Malaysians but also Muslims from overseas.

He said that despite all these, Pas refused to acknowledge the success of Umno's contributions in the inculcation of Islamic values in the administration.

Instead, Pas ridiculed Umno's efforts by sowing the seeds of Muslim disunity with its two imams, two mosques and two cemeteries practices.

Criticising the Pas leadership, Dr Mahathir said its leaders like Haji Fadzil Noor and Haji Hadi Awang sang different tunes on different occasions over their relationship with the DAP.

For instance, in Penang, Haji Hadi had said that Pas must work with the DAP and that DAP secretary general Lim Kit Siang supported Islam. But Haji Hadi dared not repeat this at his base in Kampung Gajil in Terengganu.

Dr Mahathir was confident that Pas followers would "call the bluff" of their leaders, who are misleading them for their own personal gains.

He urged Umno members not to show any animosity towards Pas followers who were misled by their leaders. Instead, Umno members should try to change the view of Pas members with kindness, tolerance and educated arguments.

He also criticised Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, the Semangar 46 leader,