

PM: Be cautious in exercising your rights

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By Harpajan Singh

JERANTUT, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged the people today to be cautious in exercising their rights as voters.

He said abuse of the democratic system could be detrimental to the nation's future.

The Prime Minister likened the democratic system to a knife which could be used to cut fruits or commit murder.

"There is nothing wrong with a knife but it depends on the user.

"In the same way, if you use democracy wisely, you will get a lot of privileges ... but if you use it to threaten the Government, then it becomes something else," he told about 5,000 Umno and Barisan supporters here.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a nationwide pre-election tour, regretted that certain rural folk were threatening to vote for Semangat 46 unless their demands for projects were met before the general election.

Although such threats were normal before a general election, he said those who were pressuring the Government had forgotten all that had been done for them so far.

He said petty problems should not come in the way of the people when deciding on their future.

"You have to look at things from a wider perspective. Don't only consider your constituency ... your decision also plays a part in the election of a government."

Dr Mahathir said that PAS often instigated rural folk against the Government by telling them they had yet to get roads and water supply when others enjoyed such facilities.

He told voters that if they supported the Opposition just to get back at the Government, they would end up at the losing

end because opposition candidates would not be able to see to their needs.

He said it was obvious that through its co-operation with DAP, PAS was cheating its supporters.

"PAS had criticised Umno for working with non-Malay parties, but today there is a marriage between Haji Fadzil Noor and Mr Lim Kit Siang.

"I cannot understand what sort of pact this is ... PAS claims to champion its cause for an Islamic administration while DAP is fighting for a secular administration.

"If PAS can work with DAP and the CCC (Chinese Consultative Council) now, what is wrong with working with Umno which is also striving to assimilate Islamic values in the government administration?"

Dr Mahathir said Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's Semangat 46 party was on a nationwide exercise to woo leaders who were dissatisfied with the Government.

He said that even if the Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah could form a new government, it would not be able to serve the people effectively.

"Tengku Razaleigh has assessed that his party will win 40 seats, the DAP 30 and PAS 25. That will give them only 95 of the total 180 seats. But what sort of a government will this be?"

"And as Prime Minister, Tengku Razaleigh will be too busy attending to the demands and pressures from DAP and PAS. What about serving the people?"

"Such a government will collapse if either of the two parties withdrew from the coalition."

Dr Mahathir reminded the people that they needed a strong government like the Barisan Nasional if they wanted to continue enjoying rapid development.

