

Barisan to campaign for Sabah Independents

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JOHOR BARU, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional will campaign for independent candidates contesting against the Parti Bersatu Sabah in the general election to retaliate against its last-minute withdrawal from the ruling coalition.

While making it clear that all the BN's doors are closed to the PBS, the Prime Minister and BN chairman said the BN would send its campaigners to Sabah to help the Independents.

"Whether they (Independents) will join the BN later on or not is a small matter. But we will help them," he told reporters after holding a closed-door meeting with Johor BN candidates here.

Dr Mahathir said if the PBS could pull out of the BN and choose to co-operate with the Semangat 46, he did not see why the Independents could not join the BN or seek its help in the general election.

Asked whether he intended to meet PBS president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan to persuade him to change his mind, Dr Mahathir replied: "Not necessary".

On whether he would allow component parties to join and quit the BN as they liked, he said it was not a question of allowing them (to do so).

"It (PBS) chose to quit. What can we do?"

The Prime Minister reiterated that the PBS pullout and its decision to join forces with Semangat 46 would not affect the BN's chances of retaining a two-thirds majority in Parliament as the PBS only has 14 parliamentary seats.

"In fact, the PBS-Semangat 46 pact has a positive effect (on the BN) in the east coast States because (it shows) that Pas is now befriending all kinds of people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the PBS' last-minute withdrawal was pre-planned by it, which had discussions with Semangat 46.

"That was why in his recent speech, (Semangat 46

president) Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) said they (Semangat 46) should also take into consideration the non-Muslim Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak.

"Then the PBS refused to use the BN symbol. When I wanted to go there (to Sabah), he (Datuk Seri Pairin) tried to persuade me not to go. He also wanted me to make promises," Dr Mahathir said.

He said when he visited Sabah recently, he observed that Datuk Seri Pairin was so friendly with the president of the United Sabah National Organisation, Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun.

Telegrams

"I have never seen them like that before. So I thought the situation was really good."

Dr Mahathir said he had received telegrams from leaders of the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak, Sarawak National Party and the Sarawak United People's Party, reaffirming their loyalty to the coalition.

MCA president Datuk

Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, he said, had also phoned him for the same purpose.

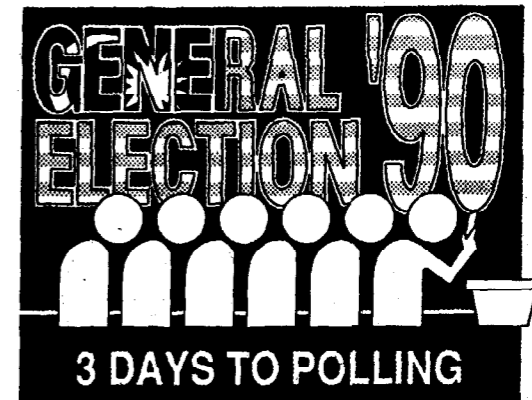
"Only Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu (MIC president) and Datuk Dr Lim Keng Yaik (Gerakan president) have not been able to contact me as I have been moving around," he said.

In Malacca, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the PBS Government in Sabah had never had the Malaysian spirit as issues concerning oil royalties were not raised when the State did not have oil resources not too long ago.

"When the State did not produce oil, its leaders were willing to share, but now that it is richer, they are demanding royalties," he said when opening the \$50 million SEDC building, Graha Maju, here this evening.

The Prime Minister described PBS leaders as greedy and said they would be better off outside the Barisan Nasional.

He said the taxation system in the country was such that the rich pay more to help the less fortunate members of society who could not afford to supple-



ment their needs.

"What will happen to the poor if the rich become greedy and want all for themselves. If they don't pay taxes, then the poor will suffer. The Government will not have enough funds to supplement the needs of the poor children who need education.

"Greed and unwillingness to help others is not the attitude that we would like to see. People with these characteristics are better off outside the Barisan Nasional," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, the Prime Minister said he would not allow any of the BN component parties, including Usno, to stage demonstrations as a result of the PBS pullout.

He also said it was unlikely that the election would be postponed in Sabah because the law did not provide for it.

The 14-storey Graha Maju complex at Jalan Tan Chay Yan houses the Malacca SEDC and the Malacca Water Authority offices.