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BN WILL RECAPTURE SABAH, SAYS MAHATHIR

Mahathir-BN

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SANDAKAN, April 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he is confident that the Barisan Nasional BN can regain power in Sabah and unseat the ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS).

He said the BN's main reason for wanting to run the state again was for 'the future progress of Sabah, now straggling away from the mainstream of development.

While other BN-run states in the Federation were enjoying prosperity, Sabah and PAS-run Kelantan were headed for the opposite way, he said.

+We are neither power crazy, nor are we after positions or want to practice communal politics. We just want to bring progress and development.,+ Dr Mahathir said addressing a rally, of about 15,000 people at the municipal field here this afternoon.

The event was televised live nationwide by Radio Television Malaysia.

The Prime Minister and UMNO president, in his hour-long speech, spoke of Malaysia's political stability and economic achievements which he attributed to the tolerance of its multi-racial people which formed the pillar of the BN.-- more

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Mahathir-BN 2 Sandakan

The Prime Minister said he was saddened by the depressing state of Sabah's economy.

In fact, he said, Sarawak which was trailing Sabah development-wise, had overtaken the state.

+Look at Sandakan. Last time it was a major trading centre in the state. The people were very affluent. This was where you see the wealth of Sabah. There were so many millionaires and tycoons.+

+By right, things should have been better than ever,. But what happens is the opposite. It is no longer a well-known commercial centre. The number of wealthy people is declining,+ he said.

He said it was difficult for the Federal Government to channel aid to a state government run by the Opposition as their leaders would claim credit for securing the aid..

+The opposition government is financially weak, inefficient and bankrupt of ideas. They don't have the ability to bring about development. Only the Federal Government has that ability,+ he said.

He cited several mammoth projects such as the national car Proton Saga; the Perwaja still mill, the development of Langkawi and Labuan which were strongly denounced by detractors who alleged that these projects would jeopardise the nation.-- more, .

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Mahathir-BN 2 (last) Sandakan

+Today these projects had not only gained international recognition -but also reaped massive profits.

+That is why if, the RN get to run Sabah, the people stand to gain more. The PBS rule is only confined to politics of staying in power,+ he said.

While urging the people of Sabah to support the BN, he asked them to think deeply what benefits could an opposition party bring to Sabah.

+The people have lost a lot by not choosing the BN but it is never too late to return the BN to power in the next general election.

+If they (the PBS) dare, they will hold a state election soon. Other wise, it is a long way to go,+ he said in lighter vein referring to speculation that the state government would hold a snap election and he urged the electorate to reject PBS and the DAP.

In his speech Sabah UMNO deputy chairman Tun Datuk Mustapha Datu Harun pledged support for Dr Mahathir's leadership from UMNO members in the state.

Present were Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat who is UMNO secretary-general and other Sabah UMNO leaders. -- Bernama

▼30/04/21-11MST