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Mahathir-Elections

BN IS CONFIDENT OF WINNING MORE PARLIAMENT AND STATE SEATS

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KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional is confident it will win more parliament and state seats in the coming general election with the defection of opposition members to the coalition's component parties, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister, who is BN chairman, said the opposition parties had been weakened not only by the exodus of its ordinary members but also of the leaders to BN.

The BN's majority in Parliament was now stronger than in 1990, especially with the inclusion of Members of Parliament who defected from Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), he told reporters after opening the MCA's 41st annual general assembly at Wisma MCA here.

In the 1990 general election, BN won 127 of the 180 parliament seats it contested.

It now commanded 142 seats with the inclusion of two Parti Semangat 46 MPs and 11 PBS MPs. Two BN MPs, Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun and his son Datu Amirkahar quit BN. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said the position of opposition parties in Sabah was growing weaker; they now only had five MPs and five State Assemblymen.

Although most of the PBS MPs and State Assemblymen had joined BN and Sabah was now ruled by a BN government, the component parties must ensure the continued support of the people, he added.

Dr Mahathir was also confident that the coming general election would not see BN suffering 100 per cent defeat in Kelantan like what happened in the 1990 general election; it was possible BN would win a number of parliament and state seats.

In the case of Pulau Pinang, which the DAP was out to capture, he said BN's control would be maintained unless the people "simply want to reject BN."

"I do not know if the people of Pulau Pinang want to reject BN because in terms of service, the party has brought much benefit to them and they should give their support," he added. -- more

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Dr Mahathir said although the date for the general election had yet to be decided, BN was 90 per cent prepared for it and it was only a question of time.

The coalition's election machinery at all levels, from the villages to the towns, were only waiting for the time to go into action, he added.

Asked when the general election would be held as the BN mandate to rule would expire in October next year, he said he would announce the date at any time but he could not divulge now as it was still a secret.

"Any time at all, we are prepared. The question is whose stamina (can) last longer. We want to see whether the opposition can last or not," he added.

Dr Mahathir said although conditions were suitable for the general election to be held, the re-delineation of constituencies had to be taken into account.

He believed the bouyant economic position of the country would remain stable till the end of the year and would not have a negative influence on the general election. -- Bernama

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