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BN banking on silent majority to win: PM

THE Barisan Nasional (BN) is banking on the "silent majority" to give it a landslide victory in the country's 10th general elections since Independence.

Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said voters from the silent majority are those who are inactive in politics but are nevertheless eligible to exercise their constitutional voting rights next week.

"We want all among the silent majority to vote for BN candidates this November 29. All must come out and give support to BN," he said when addressing the Federal Territory BN members in Bangsar, Selangor yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said he was encouraged by meetings he had with groups representing the silent majority after they pledged support for BN. The Prime Minister had earlier met with members of the association of ex-servicemen and the Union of Sikh Society at his office in Putrajaya, Selangor.

"We did not force them or asked them. They come to us voluntarily. They know that their livelihood had improved when the country is ruled by the BN administration," he said.

Dr Mahathir said one reason why BN seeks a fresh mandate to rule Malaysia is that the party fears the Opposition may destroy the country if it gains power.

"We want to win in the elections to prevent irresponsible parties from taking over the administration of the country. Their (Opposition) coalition is unreal. They cannot see eye-to-eye on many issues. The Opposition coalition comprises the Parti Keadilan Nasional, Pas, the Democratic Action Party and Parti Rakyat Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir called on constituents who supported BN to ignore the races of the BN Parliamentary or state nominees and just vote these candidates as they are representing the party.

For an area with a Chinese majority, the BN election campaign machinery should woo Malays in the constituencies to go out and exercise their voting rights on general elections day.

"Just ignore the races of the BN nominees. What's more important is the party. On election day, this candidate has no face. The person's face is the BN symbol (scale of justice)," he added.

Earlier, Bernama said Dr Mahathir said Barisan Nasional (BN) needs a two-third majority so that the country will have a strong and solid Government.

He said a Government without a big majority will collapse if its members go over to Opposition party.

"We want a two-third majority not because we want to amend the constitution, but without a two-third majority, with only 51 per cent, when two or three cross over to opposition parties, the Government will collapse," he told members of the Malaysian Ex-Servicemen's Association, at his office in Putrajaya.

He said a Government with a slim majority would not be solid and strong, and would fail to make important decisions like tax enforcement that is opposed by some quarters.

Citing the New Economic Policy (NEP) aimed at assisting the Bumiputeras, he said that it could not be implemented if the Government was not strong.

"But if we get only 51 per cent, our members join the opposition parties, the Government will collapse. So we cannot afford to assist and implement the New Economic Policy."

The Prime Minister said that a strong Government with a big majority now would not collapse if members were to join the opposition parties.

The BN, comprising 14 component parties, would also remain solid in the event that two or three parties were to join the opposition, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that a strong Government was also needed to defend the nation which was still "young" even though the country had been independent for 42 years.

"We cannot be sure that once we achieve independence, we will remain independent forever. Once we achieve independence, we can only remain independent if we know how to defend our country," he said.

He said that peace and unity were vital to prevent any attempts to dominate the country.

Such attempts could be seen in a neighbouring country where some provinces were fighting for independence, he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government would always appreciate the services and sacrifices of servicemen including those who had retired, especially those who defended the country against the communist.

At the meeting, the 200 members representing the association pledged support for Dr Mahathir's leadership. The association has 200,000 members.

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