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Election-Mahathir (Kelantan)- Putrajaya

BN CONFIDENT OF TOPPLING PAS IN KELANTAN- DR MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that the Barisan Nasional (BN) will wrest control of Kelantan from PAS in the coming general election.

"The Kelantan people will not renew the mandate of PAS which has thrown away its principles and the Constitution merely to gain the support of the DAP," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Kelantan people had now realised that they could no longer trust PAS as its struggle was not based on principles or the Constitution but merely on serving its own interests.

Speaking at a news conference at the Prime Minister's Department here after the announcement of the dissolution of the Dewan Rakyat, he said PAS was willing to do anything to get support particularly from the DAP.

"Whatever the DAP wants, PAS will entertain," the Prime Minister said.

He said the Kelantan Menteri Besar and Chief of PAS Ulama Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat had quashed and thrown away the PAS Constitution and was doing things according to his own whims and fancies.

"He does anything he pleases, he can offer this and that even what is not provided for in the Constitution he will offer," he told a news conference which was also attended by leaders of BN parties.

PAS which has ruled Kelantan since 1990 has 26 seats in the state legislature and the BN has 17. Of the 14 Parliamentary seats in Kelantan, the BN has eight and PAS the rest.

Replying to questions, the Prime Minister said the BN was confident of winning a two-third majority in the Dewan Rakyat.

Asked whether the so-called Alternative Front would pose a challenge to the BN, Dr Mahathir said, "the Alternative Front does not exist but what exists is an Alternative Broken Front."

He said all four opposition parties -- Parti Keadilan Nasional, PAS, DAP and Parti Rakyat Malaysia -- which formed the so-called front, did not have any similarity of perception.

"They will claw at each other....believe me. If they are unhappy with the other party, they will try to topple their candidates," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked about the opposition "One to One" strategy, the Prime Minister said even though it would appear as one to one strategy, they would no doubt sabotage each other.

Asked about the possibility of a more aggressive opposition campaign, Dr Mahathir appealed to the people to be calm and not be carried away by untoward methods.

"The possibility is there...realising that they are unable to win, they will start riots here and there. Perhaps they will become violent and ensure that there is no election," he said.

"They may also claim that the general election was not free and fair and was not conducted well. All these allegations we anticipate," he said.

Asked whether the pledges in the Alternative Front manifesto would attract younger voters, Dr Mahathir said, "They will promise the moon, the sun and everything because they know they're going to lose. We don't make promises which we cannot keep."

He said the people should recall that the opposition party which pledged to give the post of Deputy Kelantan Menteri Besar to then Parti Melayu Semangat 46, did not keep its pledge.

In view of this the Parti Melayu Semangat 46 was disappointed and left PAS to join Umno.

Asked if he was avoiding the more than 650,000 new voters who will only be eligible to vote early next year, Dr Mahathir said: "I have no reason to avoid them. They are voters, we don't avoid voters, we go to them every day. So we don't avoid the people."

When reporters asked about the presence of foreign observers, the Prime Minister said, "We have never barred foreign observers."

He said, "We have trial here...it is open...all can see...there are diplomats and also the foreign press, the opposition is there too and then they claim that it is not a fair trial."

Dr Mahathir said foreign observers would make comments according to their taste and if they did not like it they would say that the election was not fair and if they liked they would say it was fair.

"But what is important to us is that we will be fair in this election. We have always been fair. Otherwise as you find in some countries, the opposition cannot win at all. But in this country the opposition can not only win seats, but actually take over the government in this country...that's the measure of our democracy..." he added.

-- BERNAMA

KHY AAM