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Mahathir-Kelantan

BN CONFIDENT OF WINNING POLLS IN KELANTAN, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA BAHARU, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident that the Barisan Nasional can return to power in Kelantan by getting the support of a majority of the people there in the next general election.

"We believe we can win and form the government after the election," he told reporters after chairing a closed-door meeting with BN state leaders and elected representatives here today.

The Prime Minister said he told them to be ready for the general election which could be held anytime between now and April next year.

The leaders and representatives were confident of a BN victory provided certain measures were adopted and accepted by the candidates, said Dr Mahathir.

"Everyone in Kelantan has made an assessment on the possibility of the party (BN) winning, and many of them are of the opinion that if certain matters are accepted by all candidates and if measures to be taken by the party are well received and there is no objection, then we can win," he said.

Dr Mahathir declined to reveal the measures to be taken by Kelantan BN, saying they were confidential.

The Prime Minister said BN could only win if all sections of the coalition put party interests above self-interests.

"Sometimes we find some people do not agree (with the measures taken by BN), that becomes a problem. What we want is for everyone to give priority to the party, not self-interests," he said.

Asked if Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's appointment as Deputy Prime Minister was a sign that the general election was around the corner, Dr Mahathir said: "Everything is possible. We may be do it earlier or later, anytime".

The BN has 18 seats in the Kelantan state legislative assembly while the other 25 seats are held by the ruling PAS state government.

On the position of Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in the Kelantan Umno liaison committee, Dr Mahathir said the former finance minister had not been given a post but would help Umno in his capacity as an ordinary member.

"As an Umno member, he will help Umno and BN in that capacity. He is influential and as such will play a big role," said Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president and BN chairman.

On whether Razaleigh would be appointed as an adviser to the National Economic Action Council in view of his experience and knowledge in the field of economics, Dr Mahathir said: "we will sometimes call upon anyone with expertise."

On the possibility of Razaleigh returning to hold a senior position in Umno, Dr Mahathir said that could happen as the former Umno vice-president had the right to contest for a top post in the next party general assembly.

Dr Mahathir was also asked if Razaleigh needed to explain his failure to be chosen as the Deputy Prime Minister to former Parti Melayu Semangat 46 members who had returned to Umno with Razaleigh.

"He (Razaleigh) need not explain why he was not selected. He has acknowledged that several people have the potential to hold the post but only one can get it. The others need to give their support," the Prime Minister added.

-- BERNAMA

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