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Mahathir-Manifesto

BN MANIFESTO EMPHASISES VIRTUES, SAYS PM

BANDAR JENGKA, Sept 7 (Bernama) -- Virtues and doing good have always been the emphasis in the manifesto of the Barisan Nasional (BN) because the governing coalition desires harmonious living for Malaysians, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the BN manifesto had never been designed to incite ill-feelings that could lead to racial violence.

Nor had the manifesto attempted to create religious ill-will by harping on misconceptions that a particular state has more churches than mosques, he said.

"We don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. We want the people to acknowledge the good things that the BN rule has brought about and we'll continue pursuing this policy," Dr Mahathir told reporters who approached him after addressing a meet-the-people rally the Nadi Kota mini stadium here.

The prime minister said the government adhered to a policy of developing the country in a harmonious climate and not in an environment that provoked Muslims to fight against fellow Muslims or that pit Muslims against Christians.

"This is what the opposition is preaching. That's why they've been sermonising to create hatred towards Christians," he said elaborating his statement yesterday about a mosque official alleging in his sermon that Melaka has more churches than mosques.

Expressing disappointment with the sermoniser, Dr Mahathir reminded religious officials against using mosques to sow intolerance and undermine multi-racial harmony in Malaysia.

Asked on allegations that the Malays did not benefit from the country's robust construction industry, the prime minister said even if mosque-builders were from another community, the Malays had indeed reaped the benefits.

"We find mosques everywhere we go in Malaysia. (wherever the place) the first building we put is the mosque. We have the International Islamic University, Islamic bank and insurance...(don't ) all these benefit the Malays," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, expressed confidence that the BN would again, without much difficulty, score a thumping victory in Pahang in the coming general election.

" I reckon Pahang not only can easily beat all the opposition parties but also regain the seat that we lost," he said when asked about BN's prospects in the state in the coming polls.

In the 1995 general election, the BN made a clean sweep of the 11 parliamentary seats in Pahang and lost only one of the 38 state seats, that is to the DAP in Triang.

On forecast of the BN losing several seats in Pahang, Perlis and Kedah in the coming general election, Dr Mahathir said opposition parties made such claims only to console themselves and would follow that with all sorts of promises which they knew they could not deliver.

He was also asked about Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's appeal to state Umno liaison chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to convince the federal government into writing off the RM550 million that Kota Bharu owed Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir said the matter could easily be resolved by making Tengku

Razaleigh the Kelantan Menteri Besar.

"We'll do anything for him...he doesn't have to ask, we'll help Kelantan," said Dr Mahathir.

While expressing pleasure for being with the 5,000 people, mostly Felda settlers at today's gathering, the prime minister said in lighter vein: "The only thing is that I feel like my arm coming off with so much jerking and pulling (when we shake hands)."

-- BERNAMA

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