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Clarion call to Wanita, Youth

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Barisan Nasional's election campaign kicked off today (see CORRECTION above) with a clarion call to its Youth and Wanita wings to ensure the coalition was returned to power with a convincing two-thirds majority.

The call was made by BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who addressed some 10,000 Youth and Wanita members directly involved in the election campaign, during a briefing at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

As he spoke, Dr Mahathir was interrupted several times with loud applause and shouts of Hidup Malaysia, Hidup Barisan Nasional and Hidup Mahathir.

The Prime Minister spoke at length on how important it was for the BN to retain the two-thirds majority and asked the BN Youth to ensure that there were no disturbances during the polls and help the police maintain peace.

It was important, Dr Mahathir said, that the BN Youth co-operated with the police to ensure a peaceful election.

He said this was because the Opposition, particularly Parti Keadilan Nasional, would resort to rioting when it discovered it had no real support from the people.

The Wanita members were told to explain to voters the actual situation in the country so that they would not be confused following the barrage of lies and slander spread by the Opposition.

"This is our last meeting...you have heard the semboyan (signal) ... your job now is to go back to your respective constituencies and ensure our struggles for the race, nation and religion are preserved," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he was confident Keadilan would lose all the seats it contested.

"When they discover that they do not have the support, their leaders will, out of frustration, ask them to riot as their way of doing justice is to riot in the streets," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Opposition, especially Keadilan, had issued a warning that the BN would "organise" riots if it lost the election when actually it was planning to do so itself.

"But I am not asking you (Youth) to fight them but it is your responsibility to ensure that our campaigns run smoothly," Dr Mahathir said.

Also present were leaders from the Youth and Wanita wings of the BN component parties.

He said the Wanita wings should ensure they explained the exact situation to the women folk as women made up 54 per cent of all registered voters.

Dr Mahathir said it should not be forgotten that on average, 59 per cent of those who went out to vote were women.

"Your (Wanita) role is to help correct Pas' views, which sees women's responsibilities as only to cook for their husbands and to satisfy their lust.

"Pas says women can vote but they cannot contest. They need not think... they just have to vote for the party which their husbands support but they cannot contest," he said adding that Pas made a mockery of women.

Dr Mahathir said the BN was different as women had the same rights as men. Women could even become candidates and contest elections.

"Go out together, day and night, to clarify what the actual scenario is

so that women voters and the men will vote for BN," he said.

Towards the end, Dr Mahathir asked all those present to stand and repeat after him, a battle pledge or Watakah Perjuangan.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir spoke of the country's achievements which include the successful hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 1989, the Commonwealth Games (1998), the Formula One Grand Prix, and the coming World Golf Cup next week.

"We are only 42 years old and at one time we were associated with tin. But today we have progressed by leaps and bounds and proven that we can do everything ... BN has revived the Malaysian spirit but there is still a lot to do and develop, we are not done yet which is why we cannot let any other party win in our country," he said.

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