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Mahathir-Umno (Opposition)

DR M: OPPOSITION PARTIES HOODWINKING EACH OTHER

KUALA LUMPUR, June 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today opposition parties seeking to form a pact are involved in a make-believe act and trying to hoodwink each other.

The prime minister said they were fishing in troubled waters by using the misfortunes of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his family to strengthen themselves and weaken Umno.

"They pretend to support Datuk Seri Anwar. The same is true of Datuk Seri Anwar who now conspires with the opposition. He joins them (through Parti Keadilan Nasional led by his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail) for his own self interest," said Dr Mahathir in his policy address at the 53rd Umno General Assembly here.

The proposed pact between PAS, DAP and Keadilan was aimed at serving their respective self interest, the Umno president said in the address themed "National Dignity Umno's Responsibility".

"There is no common struggle or objective in this pact other than self interest. Each plans to hoodwink the other.

"Each will drop its partner once it makes some gains in the general election," said Dr Mahathir.

He said the opposition was making use of Keadilan and was not saddened by Anwar's dismissal as deputy prime minister, the accusations and charges against him, or his imprisonment.

The prime minister said the DAP's explanation that the party would not deny Malay and Bumiputera special privileges was only given after the "Malaysian Malaysia" it was fighting for was condemned by Umno and the Malays.

"Is it possible that PAS' Islamic State is DAP's Malaysian Malaysia?" he asked.

As for Keadilan, Dr Mahathir said the party was formed merely to fight for Anwar's freedom.

Keadilan, according to him, supported all policies and all forms of struggle including those of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) so long as it could gain support and weaken Umno.

"Justice for this party is only Datuk Seri Anwar's release," he said.

Turning to PAS, Dr Mahathir said it was a party which easily changed its directions according to circumstances, especially on cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims.

He said PAS had initially claimed that Muslims who cooperated with non-Muslims were infidels but stopped doing so when it joined Barisan Nasional and when seeking to form a pact with DAP.

"Now PAS is willing to accept non-Muslims as members. What edict will PAS come up with pertaining to this?" he said.

Dr Mahathir also hit out at PAS leaders for using filthy words against Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi by saying "the Badawi (Bedouins) in Malaysia are pig rearers".

"This cynicism is baseless as Datuk Abdullah Badawi was tasked with coordinating work to eliminate the JE (Japanese Encephalitis) virus, not to breed pigs.

"Beyond that, it was claimed that God swears and therefore Muslims are allowed to swear," said Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister described PAS members obsessed with the party as being "from the Asabiah group, a group that is too fanatical in supporting

their group that they cannot differentiate between good and evil, right from wrong".

As a result, he said, when PAS members were caught for khalwat, they were regarded not guilty.

"Only others can be found guilty," he said.

Dr Mahathir also referred to the opposition claim that whichever party that ruled Malaysia would be as successful as the Barisan Nasional government.

He said PAS and Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) had been given the opportunity to rule at the state-level but both allegedly could not administer with integrity.

"When PBS ruled Sabah, street lights were not not functioning and the development stalled although large amounts of timber were extracted for state revenue," he said.

In PAS-ruled Kelantan, the federal government agreed to provide loans because it sympathised with the people and not because it believed in the ability of the state government, said Dr Mahathir.

"The ability or inability of non-Barisan Nasional governments has been proven to us. Let no one be fooled by the claim that whichever government that ruled Malaysia will be just as successful as the Barisan Nasional government," he added.

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