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Do not be complacent, says Dr Mahathir

KANGAR, Mon.- Barisan Nasional component parties are reminded not to be complacent and think the coalition can easily win seats in the coming general election.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said only hard work will determine whether the BN will repeat the victorious results of the last general election.

"Do not think we will continue winning...we must work hard," said Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, when addressing some 2,000 State BN leaders at Dewan Warisan today. He said election results could not be pre-determined and the BN must not be over-confident.

"I am one of those candidates who had won, lost and also won uncontested...when I least expected to lose, I lost," he said, in response to a promise by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim that Perlis BN will ensure a clean sweep in the coming general election.

Dr Mahathir said he won in the 1964 general election not because he contested in his constituency but because of the hard work of the constituents to ensure his victory.

"I was a "parachute candidate" and the people there had to accept me and they worked hard for my victory. Later, I contested in the same constituency and lost," he said.

Dr Mahathir won the Kota Setar Selatan parliamentary seat in 1964 defeating Shaari Abdul Shukor of Pas by a majority of 4,210 votes. He defended the seat in 1969 and lost to Yusof Rawa of Pas who won by a majority of 989 votes. He won the Kubang Pasu seat uncontested in 1974.

He also reminded BN component parties not to easily make promises when faced with demands of certain groups, including non-governmental organisations.

If they were not careful, the BN might not be able to fulfill the promises and this could backfire and make BN lose its credibility, he added.

Reminding such groups not to take advantage of the coming general election to make unreasonable demands to pressure the BN Government to fulfill their "wish list", Dr Mahathir said the Government would not bow to such pressure.

Citing an example, Dr Mahathir said an NGO had distributed letters to all elected representatives asking them to state whether they would grant their wishes.

"They know we are in a weak position when facing elections and they want to force us to grant their wishes. Recently, there was also a body representing certain Chinese groups making their "wish list", he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had always granted the wishes of NGOs which it considered reasonable and which did not cause hostility among the races.

Dr Mahathir, who is here on a two-day working visit, earlier held a closed-door meeting with State Umno leaders. He also addressed a gathering at Stadium Utama.

Earlier, he was led into town by a convoy of more than 1,000 motorcycles and several hundreds other vehicles, most flying the Jalur Gemilang, Perlis and Barisan Nasional flags.

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