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Mahathir-Kubang Pasu

DR M WELCOMES ANYONE TO CONTEST AGAINST HIM IN KUBANG PASU

SEREMBAN, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today former lecturer Datuk Harun Din or any other opposition party member is welcomed to contest against him in the Kubang Pasu constituency.

"Wan Azizah wants to contest in Kubang Pasu, Harun Din too wants to fight (me). That's good, whoever wants to go to Kubang Pasu, go ahead," he said, commenting on speculation that Harun would be fielded against him.

Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, the wife of sacked deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, is the president of Parti Keadilan Nasional, while Harun is a PAS member.

Dr Mahathir said PAS members nowadays referred to Kubang Pasu as Kubang Pas and "it has become Kubang Pas because PAS members like to stay in the kubang (slough)".

The prime minister was speaking to reporters here at the end of a two-day working visit to Negeri Sembilan.

Replying to a question on the appropriate time to hold the general election, he said all dates were suitable and the polls would certainly be held before July next year.

"We can call for the election anytime, but we don't want to waste money. We (government) have been given a term of five years ...holding elections cost money and if we shorten the term of the government that's not useful.

"If we can wait until the last day, we wait until the last day. If we can't we do it (hold the election) earlier a bit," he said.

On the suggestion in Keadilan's manifesto that the term of the prime minister be restricted to two terms, Dr Mahathir said that was up to the people to decide.

"There should not be any restrictions on the people in choosing the candidate they want, what's the reason for imposing a limit," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the two-term restriction might be appropriate for those only interested in holding the post but the Barisan Nasional (BN) government accorded greater priority to performing its duties.

He said a prime minister needed time to carry out his work. The first term would be used to plan things, the second on implementing them, and only in the third term could the results be seen.

"We want to work. However tired we are, even up the age of 100, if we can work and the people want us to work, then we do what we have to do," he said.

The prime minister, who was satisfied with the support shown by the people during his visit to Negeri Sembilan and other states, expressed confidence that the BN could return to power with a massive victory with adequate preparations.

He did not rule out the possibility of making a second round of visit to all parts of the country, and even a third round, to meet the people before the general election in view of the strong support he had received.

Asked if the government would take any action with regard to alleged religious deviation by PAS, Dr Mahathir said the government would explain to Umno and government supporters, then to groups similar to PAS and finally to PAS supporters.

"That's because PAS supporters' ability to think has been destroyed by PAS. If we show them a white paper and we say it's white, they'll say it's green because they can only see green," he added.

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