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Khalil-Umno

DR MAHATHIR'S LEADERSHIP WILL ENSURE BN'S VICTORY, SAYS KHALIL

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob strongly believes that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will once again lead Barisan Nasional (BN) to victory in the coming general election.

"I strongly believe that he can lead us to victory, as in previous elections," he said during an interview with the foreign media.

Citing BN's victory in the recent Sabah state election, Khalil said Dr Mahathir might surprise his critics in the coming general election.

"Look at Sabah for example. If I were to judge from what the foreign media were saying, we would have lost and probably the Prime Minister might have resigned. But you just look at the results. You can interpret that as a surprise," he said.

He said in the recent Sabah election the Barisan Nasional election machinery had been able to give the correct information to the people.

"We let them judge and assess what we have done for them," he said.

When asked on his opinion whether Umno would have a future without Dr Mahathir, Khalil said: "UMNO is dependent on two factors -- strong leadership and good membership in terms of numbers and contribution by the members."

Asked if he believed that Dr Mahathir would continue to lead Umno, he replied: "Oh yes, yes, yes!"

Asked how confident he was in winning the coming general election, Khalil said the election machinery is ever ready.

"I can say that it is better organised. We are able to move our election machinery very fast. This is the advantage that we have because most people have the experience in manning the machinery for the election," he added.

Asked whether the oppositions were now more credible than they were previously, Khalil said there were no signs that the oppositions were coming to terms with one another.

"I don't see any indication that they can form a formidable coalition. There is nothing to that effect so far," he said.

Whether he thought the oppositions were still in disarray, Khalil said, "I should think so because some of the basic principles in forming the pact are not there. For example, they are busy talking about who should be Prime Minister whereas they should concentrate on how to get together."

On claims that many former UMNO members were now defecting to their (opposition) side and were driving thousands of Umno members to join them, he said there was no trend of Umno members moving over to the opposition side.

He said he had gone through the data and they did not indicate there was a movement out of the party.

Unlike previously when the Semangat 46 moved out, a lot of leaders were seen moving out including cabinet ministers, there was a clear exodus of people but not this time, he said.

When asked on the number of members Umno had lost in the last 12 months, he said there was no loss, in fact the number had increased and that he would announce the figure tomorrow.

--BERNAMA

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