

20 JUL 1999

Mahathir-visit

DR MAHATHIR'S VISIT BRINGS HOPES TO PEOPLE OF KELANTAN

KOTA BAHARU, July 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's two-day working visit to Kelantan beginning Thursday brings hopes to Umno members and the people of Kelantan who want the Barisan Nasional (BN) back in power in the state.

With the general election fever among the people, Dr Mahathir's presence hopefully would spur Umno members to work harder to win back the state which PAS won in the 1990 general election.

The Prime Minister's visit this time will feature a combination of two prominent figures -- Dr Mahathir himself and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, who was appointed Kelantan Umno Chief last month. Only these two leaders are seen capable of wresting the state from PAS.

Tengku Razaleigh, in every meeting he had with the people since taking over the stewardship of Kelantan Umno on June 20, pledged to bring changes to Kelantan, with the help of the federal government.

"If he (Dr Mahathir) has given his full backing to me, the people will get whatever they ask" were repeatedly made by Tengku Razaleigh in his meeting with the people.

The first proof is the new terminal project at the Sultan Ismail Petra airport, Pengkalan Chepa, the ground-breaking ceremony of which will be performed by the Prime Minister on the first day of his visit.

The new terminal will provide many benefits to the people of Kelantan including haj pilgrims, allowing them to fly direct to Mecca. It will also be able to handle more passengers, indirectly acting as catalyst of growth for the state's economy and tourism industry.

According to the State Information Services Department statement, Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali are expected to arrive at the airport at 11.30am.

He will seek an audience with the Sultan of Kelantan, have lunch at Istana Negeri and then meet state BN leaders.

He will perform the ground-breaking ceremony at 5.15pm, attend dinner with state and federal government officers as well as community leaders at Hotel Diamond Puteri.

On Friday, Dr Mahathir is scheduled to meet Kelantan Umno Liaison Committee while Dr Siti Hasmah will visit Rumah Sri Kenangan, Taman Kemumin, Pengkalan Chepa. They are expected to return to Kuala Lumpur at 11am.

--BERNAMA

mnr ron abg