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Mahathir-Election

MAHATHIR KEEPS EVERYONE GUESSING ON GENERAL ELECTION

IPOH, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is still keeping everyone, especially the opposition, guessing as to when he will dissolve Parliament and call for a general election.

After hinting yesterday that the general election was drawing very near, he said today that he might have another round of visits to the states when the current series ended.

"I still haven't finished my rounds, I am doing my rounds and if I finish one round I may even do another round," Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said.

"I have said that we will wait for PAS' flags to rot, that takes a long time, so you can interpret it any way you like," he told a news conference at the end of his two-day visit to Perak.

"The newspapers said today that very soon we are going to have an election. That is what the newspapers say, but I have also said other things which indicate that the election is going to be (held) in a long time."

"Unless PAS make their flags from paper, then it tears very much faster, then we can have the election faster, but if they are made of canvas maybe... August next year," he said.

Dr Mahathir told Perak Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders at a meeting here yesterday to put their election machinery into top gear for the general election, including meeting members and supporters, as he could not guarantee them that the election would not be held tomorrow, a month from now or in five months.

He also said that he would give BN leaders, especially at the divisional level, time to meet members and supporters to ascertain and gain their support but he would not give them "too much time,".

Asked whether he was satisfied with the Perak BN's preparations for the election, Dr Mahathir said he was always never satisfied.

"I think even if we have achieved 100 per cent, we must achieve 120 per cent," he said.

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That was why he wanted the BN components to ensure that every member and individual they knew supported the coalition and the divisional leaders had to work harder to get to know their members and their stand, he said.

Asked whether his warning that some members of BN component parties might vote for the opposition was based on feedback that he had received,

he replied in the negative.

"The possibility is there, so we must find out, that's why I asked (them) to meet all the party members besides the supporters and other individuals," he said.

The term of the current Parliament ends in June 2000 and a general election must be held within 60 days of its dissolution.

-- BERNAMA

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