

10 NOV 1999

Mahathir-Kubang Pasu

MAHATHIR TO DEFEND KUBANG PASU SEAT

PUTRAJAYA, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he will defend the Kubang Pasu parliamentary seat in Kedah in the coming general election.

"There is no reason for me to run away from Kubang Pasu," he said when asked whether he would defend his seat in Kubang Pasu.

He said this at a press conference at the Prime Minister's Department here to announce his decision to dissolve Parliament for the 10th general election to be held.

Dr Mahathir first contested and won the Kota Setar Selatan seat (now called Kubang Pasu) in the 1964 general election. However, he lost to Haji Yusof Rawa of PAS in the 1969 general election.

Dr Mahathir regained the seat in the 1974 general election and has successfully defended it since then.

In last general election in 1995, Dr Mahathir beat PAS candidate Ahmad Ma'alim by a majority of 17,226 votes.

A total of 47,356 people are eligible to vote in Kubang Pasu in the coming polls.

Kubang Pasu has two state constituencies -- Tunjang and Jitra.

Asked about his retirement plans, Dr Mahathir said he wanted "to retire some day."

He told the journalist who asked the question about his retirement to "put it down as 'some day'".

Asked if the coming general election would be his last, the prime minister said: "The last time I thought it (the 1995 general election) was my last."

His remark drew laughter from the floor.

Dr Mahathir said he could only make plans but Allah would decide.

"We (Muslims) say Insyallah (God willing). I can plan things but the disposal of that plan is really not mine to determine," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said the coalition might field new faces in the coming election.

"We will have discussions among leaders of BN component parties to determine the people really qualified to be candidates," he said.

On seat allocations, Dr Mahathir said it would be the same as in the last general election.

"In terms of numbers (of seats), there will be no change," he said.

Dr Mahathir said there was a possibility of BN components swapping seats with each other.

The 14-party BN groups Umno, MCA, MIC, Gerakan and PPP in Peninsular Malaysia; Liberal Democratic Party, Akar Bersatu, United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Organisation, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah and Sabah Progressive Party in Sabah; and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, Sarawak United People's Party, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak and Sarawak National Party in Sarawak.

-- BERNAMA

ES YBY