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Musa-polls

MUSA WILLING TO HELP BN PROVIDED MOTIVE NOT MISUNDERSTOOD

KUALA LUMPUR, June 23 (Bernama) -- Former deputy prime minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam said he is willing to help in the Barisan Nasional campaigning for the coming general election provided his intention is not misunderstood.

His offer should not be misinterpreted as an attempt to make a political comeback, said Musa who has been in the politically inactive for the past decade.

"Everytime there's an election after I retire, I make it a point to walk at least with the BN candidate in Johor in my old constituency at least to show my support," he said.

Musa, also a former Umno deputy president, told reporters this when approached on the matter after opening a seminar on the civil service in the new millennium at the University of Malaya here.

"I would do everything if necessary but I don't want it to be to such an extent that I'm interpreted as making a comeback or trying to make a comeback. That's one thing I'm very careful about," he said.

Musa, who no longer held any party post, was also asked about Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's appointment as Kelantan Umno liaison chief.

Musa described the appointment by Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as "very appropriate".

Dr Mahathir headed the state Umno liaison committee prior to that.

"The reason firstly is that he (Razaleigh) is very experienced in Umno politics overall and secondly, is that he is not only experienced in Kelantan but also influential in the state," Musa said.

As for Kelantan, the relevance of the influence of the palace in state politics should not be discounted, Musa said.

Tengku Razaleigh, he said, could spearhead Umno efforts to wrest control of the state government from PAS.

Umno was unseated in Kelantan since the 1990 general election.

"Whether or not Umno regains Kelantan, it's hard for me to say, but the appointment will stabilise, if not reinforce, Kelantan Umno," Musa said.

To another question, Musa, who is an adjunct professor with the University of Malaya, advised Umno that as it set out to endear university students with its cause, the party should include the academic staff as well.

"We need to come face to face and interact with the campus community, be they students or lecturers.. the institutions have long been neglected and marginalised... but because of the wide-ranging impact of political developments of late, even the leaders are becoming aware of such need," he said.

Umno should not be shamed of confronting students or the academic staff when updating them with political issues, he said.

"I'm sure once the university knows that the government is not against students educating themselves, I'm sure it is capable of allowing some flexibility in trying to implement this attitude of the government," Musa added.

-- BERNAMA

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