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`Opposition only keen on power'

Farush Khan; Hamidah Atan

MALACCA, Tues. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned the people against voting the Opposition into power as it could neither deliver the goods nor uphold democracy.

The Prime Minister said the Opposition was not keen to serve the people but was only interested in power and position.

"They should not be given even one seat in the election," he told a huge crowd at a meet-the-people session in Tangga Batu, Bukit Rambai, 14km from here.

The crowd was so big that Dr Mahathir's convoy got caught in a jam and had to be diverted through village roads to reach the area where the gathering was held.

It rained briefly as the Prime Minister delivered his two-hour speech, but the crowd stayed on.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said Pas and the DAP had breached the law and shown disrespect for the democratic system even though they had yet to be given the power to run the country.

He said their negative approach could be seen from their statements and actions.

For example, he said, Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor had promised to close down newspapers and electronic media which were critical of his party.

He also spoke about Pas' newspaper, Harakah, and DAP newsletter, Rocket, which were being sold to the public although the law specified that newspapers of political parties were only meant for members.

"These parties talk so much about the law, but they themselves are breaching the law."

The BN Government, he said, was on the contrary "so generous" in not taking action against them.

"This shows we (BN) are far more democratic than they are," he said to the loud applause of the crowd comprising BN leaders, government officers, trainee teachers and the public.

On the DAP leadership, Dr Mahathir said it was authoritarian and dictatorial, judging from its leadership's unwillingness to accept criticism.

It seemed that Lim Kit Siang was the only person who could hold the secretary-general's post, he said.

"Any DAP member who speaks against him will be driven out of the party."

He said Lim was also developing a dynasty in the DAP by grooming his son Guan Eng who was the party deputy secretary-general to succeed him.

Dr Mahathir said the DAP had also been making unfounded accusations against the Government and was critical of the judiciary.

He said the Opposition was highly critical of the action although the judiciary did not practise discrimination when Guan Eng was charged in court (and convicted for sedition and publishing false news).

On Pas consultative council head Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's statement on Sunday that the ulama had proven themselves able to lead nations and play the role of leaders, he said democracy did not restrict anyone from becoming a leader and heading the Government.

"But I do not agree that only ulama should be given the right to lead the country.

"This is because those who claim to be ulama but are involved in politics will make religious interpretations that are influenced by their political belief."

He cited the case of Nik Aziz trying to defend Datuk Prof Shahnnon Ahmad over the use of profanities in his book just because Shanon was a Pas life member.

"By saying that God also uses vulgarities in the Quran, Nik Aziz is not only telling a lie, but has humiliated God."

Dr Mahathir said it was to be regretted that Pas members accepted this as a fact since it came from a person they considered an ulama.

He said based on such biased decisions and negative statements, the Opposition had proven itself to be inconsistent.

The Opposition, he said, practised double standards as it supported any decision or move which benefitted it but was critical of those not in its favour.

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