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Mahathir-PAS

PAS CONTESTS SABAH POLLS TO HELP PBS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said PAS is contesting next week's Sabah state election merely to help Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) unseat Umno and the Barisan Nasional (BN).

"They (PAS) just want to contest to pull away the Muslim voters so that Umno will lose and the PBS wins.

"I dare say directly that PAS joins the fray in Sabah just to help the PBS," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president and BN chairman.

The prime minister, who returned today from Dhaka after attending the summit meeting of the group of eight Islamic developing countries (D-8), was approached by reporters on the matter during an arrival press conference at the airport in Subang near here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the tough fight awaiting the BN in the March 12 and 13 state election with its candidates facing challenge in all the 48 seats and three-cornered fights being the minimum.

This time around PAS is fielding candidates in six seats. In the last state election none of its three candidates won.

"This has been PAS' ploy...they'll make sure Muslims lose," Dr Mahathir said.

However, Dr Mahathir said, democracy practised in the country allows anyone intending to contest to do so.

"As we're in this democratic process, when there is election, all will want to contest. Even the no-hopers join the fray. Like PAS, it has never won in Sabah," he said.

Dr Mahathir was welcomed home by Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and National Unity and Social Development Minister Datin Paduka Zaleha Ismail, among others.

Meanwhile in KOTA BAHARU, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said PAS badly needed to win in the Sabah election in order to gain a foothold in the state.

"If the party leadership wants me to go to Sabah, I'll be there to help secure the votes for PAS," he said when reporters asked him about PAS' chances of victory in next week's state polls.

-- BERNAMA

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