

11 MAR 1999

Mahathir-Sabah (Visits)

PBS TAKEN TO TASK ON LAND ACCUSATIONS

KUDAT, March 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today took the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) to task for making various negative statements and unfounded accusations against the Barisan Nasional (BN) in order to win the state election.

The Prime Minister said among the baseless accusations was that he had been given land in Keningau during his recent visit to the district.

"I call on the PBS not to go on a whispering campaign on a big issue as this. If it is true that I had been given land, then I ask Pairin (PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitigan) to make an open statement to the people that Dr Mahathir was given land in Keningau.

"There is no need to go to the villages and to tell the people of things that are not true...only to instigate and to turn the people against me whereas I am only trying to help," he said at a meet the people session here.

Dr Mahathir also denied allegations by former chief minister Datuk Harris Salleh, who is now acting president of the opposition Parti Bersekutu, that the Federal government had seized Labuan from Sabah.

"The Sabah government, which was then led by Datuk Harris, in fact handed over Labuan to the Federal government to enable the island to be developed by using Federal government allocations," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped the people in Sabah would not be taken in by the PBS tactic which only aimed to raise communal issues.

The PBS is trying to instigate the people to reject the role of the Federal government in Sabah so that the PBS leaders could have complete control of the government in the state," he said.

"PBS wanted Sabah so that they could rob the state of all its wealth, specifically the timber."

Dr Mahathir also called on the people not to fall for the promises of the opposition in the election as most of it were made in order to win votes.

Among the promises made was the Bersekutu offer of a RM300 financial reward a year to the people in Sabah if it managed to form the state government.

"They are only out to buy votes with the Yayasan Sabah money. The BN, instead, promised to give scholarships and further education opportunities to students in the state which are much more worthy in the long run," he said.

The ninth Sabah election for the 48 state seats will be held on Friday and Saturday.

The Prime Minister urged the people to vote for the BN to ensure it forms the state government so that development programmes in Sabah could be continued.

He said the Federal government has a long term development programme for Sabah which benefits the people.

"We rely on the strong support of the people for the BN in order to help Sabah develop and I hope the people will give their full support to the BN for it to form a stable government," he said.

Compared to the opposition parties, Dr Mahathir said the BN is made up of component parties which represented all the races in Malaysia and it is a stable coalition which benefits all races.

Among the BN candidates present at the function were Datuk Chong Kah

Kiat who is contesting the Kudat state seat, Datuk Amir Kahar Tun Mustapha (Banggi), Masrani Parman (Bengkoka), Datuk Markus Majihi (Matunggong) and Datuk Yong Teck Lee (Likas).

Also present were Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng.

-- BERNAMA

RAR MAI THG