

27/11/1999

Pleasant surprise for Dr Mahathir, a blow to Pas

KOTA BARU, Fri. - It was a pleasant surprise for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and a blow to the Opposition when 130 Pas members and supporters pledged loyalty to the Barisan Nasional and the national leadership.

The group waited for him at the departure hall of the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport in Pengkalan Chepa to deliver their pledge and desire to be Umno members.

The pledge was read by Husni Hussain on behalf of the group. The situation in the departure hall turned emotional with a few seen wiping tears as Husni made the pledge in front of Dr Mahathir.

It was an unscheduled event which was held just before the Prime Minister boarded the special aircraft to return to Kuala Lumpur after a half-day visit to Kelantan.

Dr Mahathir, who was overwhelmed by the show of support, thanked the group and expressed appreciation that they now realised Pas' misdeeds.

"The victims are the people. Not only is there no development (in Kelantan) but the akidah (faith) of the Muslims has also been affected because of the wrong teachings by Pas leaders, whose intention is only to create fear among supporters so that they become fanatics and continue to support the party."

He also said the Barisan Nasional had made efforts to expose Pas wrongdoings but "many closed their eyes and ears, refusing to accept our explanation".

"Pas made slanderous remarks against me and other Barisan leaders when we very well know that the Quran says that the fitnah (slander) is more sinful than murder."

Dr Mahathir said the Kelantan people should return Barisan Nasional to power for the benefit of the people and the State.

"This show of support should be translated into votes for Barisan Nasional so that the coalition can form the next Government in the State," he added.

Husni later told reporters that the group were Pas members and supporters from Pasir Puteh.

"We are disillusioned with Pas which uses Islam as a tool for its political interest and are leaving the party to join Umno."

"And I'm very proud to be able to convey this to Dr Mahathir himself," he said.

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