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PM: Pas' only interest is in winning elections

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KOTA BARU, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is impossible for Umno and the Barisan Nasional to maintain a high standard of political argument with Pas which does not have an open mind.

The Umno president and Prime Minister said Pas is interested only in winning elections and taking over the government. The party and supporters were not concerned about making positive contribution to the country.

He was asked at a Press conference at the end of his 1 1/2 day visit to Kelantan on the prescription to put a stop to the on-going childish and petty political arguments among leaders and members of rival political parties.

"They have got nothing...just to win the election and run the country - not to bring good to the country - they know Pas government in Kelantan is a failure...even water supply is not enough.

"When we gave the RM600 million soft loan, they claimed it was an acknowledgement of their capability to administer the State.

"We gave because we are sympathetic to the people of Kelantan, not because of Pas."

He said Pas supporters and members had a closed mind, and were not allowed to read newspapers, except Harakah (Pas mouthpiece) and must listen to their leaders only.

This, he said, was done for fear that if they were to listen to the explanation by Umno leaders and government, they would change their political stand.

Asked how the Barisan Nasional and Umno would counter this, Dr Mahathir said they would continue to tell the truth and would expose their lies if they made baseless accusations.

Dr Mahathir said: "If they open their minds, hearts, eyes and ears, I am convinced there will be nobody supporting Pas anymore".

Dr Mahathir replied at length to a question that the Opposition had accused him of accumulating wealth for himself and his children, saying that it was untrue.

"Even my own belongings I gave to the government and Umno. People gave me many (berpuluh) cars as gifts and all I handed over to the government."

"See at the Galeria in Langkawi...all (gifts) that people gave to me, including gold...I gave to the government. They don't give to me. I don't consider those things personal because they gave me as a Prime Minister. That's why all are for the government."

"I don't like to tell about myself. Actually others who work for the government until 55 get pension, people who continue to work like the judges until 65, they got second pension. I work until over 70 with the government, I don't get a single sen. I don't complain and I don't tell people. Only today I tell because people say I take (wealth for myself).

"Compared with people working under me, Petronas presidents, they got RM30,000 to RM40,000 salary a month. My salary is RM16,000. I don't complain."

Dr Mahathir said he used Proton cars and went for official functions in a Perodua.

"To me, this is bigger than Mercedes Benz, our own make. What for I look for money? (One of) my children did his MBA at the Wharton School (in the USA), used to work in America in one of the biggest companies, Solomon Brothers.

"When he came back, he did his own job. He bought a company in Germany. What power do I have in Germany. He bought a company in Hong Kong. He avoided doing business here (in Malaysia) and he did not buy from the government.

"What he does is his own business. Don't expect me to say, you, my son must be poor or I will not be popular. So you want me to make my son a victim. I don't have the heart to do so."

He said he did not help his children financially, except by giving them education.

Of his meeting with State Umno liaison members today, Dr Mahathir said it was about their strategies to win the general election.

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