

18 SEP 1999

Mahathir-election

SOLID SUPPORT FOR BN PROMPTS DR MAHATHIR TO CALL FOR EARLY POLLS

TUARAN, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Sabah people's solid support for Barisan Nasional (BN) had further prompted him to consider calling for an early general election.

The prime minister, however, said he would go to certain states one or two more times to gather more feedback and information before dissolving Parliament.

" I feel that we were given the mandate for five years... election has its costs... we need not hold an election before the expiry of the five-year term," he told a media conference before leaving for Kuala Lumpur.

The current five-year term ends on June 7 next year.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir spoke at a closed-door session of the Barisan Nasional (BN) Youth National Convention here.

The four-day convention which ended today was held to prepare the movement for the general election.

The prime minister said he was collecting more information and data before holding the election.

"I am waiting for all the information, the data to come in before making a decision, we do not make decisions on the spur of the moment, it is no laughing matter, we must know the information, not just from one source or one indication," he said.

On election preparations in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said the State BN was ready for the polls since the State Election was held in March this year.

"I think Sabah is certainly well-prepared, the machinery during the last state election is still intact, in fact, it had been enhanced with newer appreciation and understanding of BN... so I think Sabah is ready," he said.

The BN won the state election with more than two-thirds majority in the 48-seat state legislature.

Dr Mahathir said Sabahans strongly supported the BN as this was evident from the tumultuous welcome accorded to him by the people whenever he visited Sabah.

" This atmosphere has never prevailed before...sometimes they're hostile...but now they're not," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the people of Sabah were confident that the BN could honour all its promises to develop the state.

Asked whether there were problems in the BN which were causing him to delay the dissolution of the Parliament, he said the BN could solve all its problems.

"Anybody have problems, you ask DAP they also have problems. In Barisan Alternatif (comprising opposition parties), they want to give the worst seats to Parti Keadilan to make sure they (Keadilan) will lose," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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