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Mahathir-Sabah (government)

UMNO WILL NOT FORM ONE-PARTY GOVT, SAYS MAHATHIR

KOTA KINABALU, March 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today assured the people that Malaysia will continue to be ruled by a coalition government although Umno has enough seats to form a one-party government.

The prime minister said the ruling government would comprise component parties representing all races in the country.

" I'm giving an assurance that Umno will not form a government on its own despite having enough seats to form one," he said when speaking to the people of Petagas at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport, here.

He said Umno preferred to administer the country collectively with the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties to preserve the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect for one another established since Independence through the then Alliance.

" We will not take everything (power) so that they (component parties) will not feel marginalised and instead will join hands to support us," he said.

This is the uniqueness of the BN government which gave importance to the interests of all races and religion which opposition parties could not guarantee, said Dr Mahathir, who concludes his three-day visit to Sabah today.

He said BN's uniqueness could be seen during elections with component party leaders and members campaigning to ensure victory for Umno candidates fielded in constituencies having less Malay voters.

Similarly, Umno would support contestants from component parties standing in Malay-majority areas, said Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman.

" We adopt an attitude that if we help others, they will help us in return. It is impossible that we help people but they do not want to help us. This is Umno's philosophy," he said.

With the cooperation and tolerance shown by the BN components, Malaysia could maintain political stability and achieve economic growth without any rioting arising from the people's dissatisfaction as was happening in other developing countries, he said.

" That's why Malaysia is well-known worldwide as the most developed developing country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said other countries despite having the resources to progress after attaining independence, their leaders could not come up with development policies as they had to focus attention to maintain unity among the people.

" They cannot form a credible and efficient government due to intense politicking and their politics is divisive politics," he said.

In this regard, the prime minister urged the people to learn a lesson from the ugly incidents in the run-up to the elections in other countries with people being killed as though they were in a war.

He said rioting and civil unrest would continue even after a government was formed to vent their anger and dissatisfaction.

" These things doesn't happen in Malaysia. It is peaceful here. The elected government is allowed to rule till the expiry of the five-year term like in Kelantan as PAS is still in power," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians displayed maturity by not supporting attempts by certain groups to topple the government through demonstrations.

" They think they are smart when they used demonstrations to seize

power but they actually tarnished our culture. In the end, the people got fed up as there are no more demonstrations now," he said.

He said: " We have now returned to our original culture as Malaysians. To elect a government through an election and not by demonstrations," he said.

The prime minister said an election is held not merely to install a government but a stable government that could bring progress to the people.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that the federal government would not cooperate with Bersekutu and Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) led by two former chief ministers Datuk Harris Salleh and Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, respectively, if they were given the mandate to form the next state government.

" The two parties are spoilers. They are merely seizing the opportunity for money so that their elected representatives can get allowance and can steal (the wealth) in Sabah," he said.

Dr Mahathir gave an assurance to Sabahans that the BN would develop Sabah on par with other states in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak if it was once again given the mandate to form the next state government.

" We want to see a prosperous Sabah with the people enjoying the fruit of development. This is my promise to the Sabah people.

" I came here to appeal for votes for all BN candidates as they need to win to form a state government representing all ethnic groups and to ensure Sabah continue to progress," he added.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam, who is also Sabah Umno liaison chief.

-- BERNAMA

RAR TS