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Mahathir-BN

UMNO WON'T WANT TO RULE ALONE, SAYS MAHATHIR

SHAH ALAM, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno has no intention of running the country by itself even if can afford to do so by winning all the seats it will be contesting in the coming general election.

The party still preferred to continue sharing power and governing the country together with component parties of the ruling Barisan Nasional, said Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president and BN chairman.

"We do not wish to trick our friends and we're convinced that they will also not do that unto us. We're unlike PAS or DAP which are scheming to play out one another," Dr Mahathir said when addressing Selangor BN leaders here today.

The prime minister is on a two-day working visit to Selangor as part of his nation-wide tour to enlighten the people on the country's latest political and economic situation.

Dr Mahathir said the BN has always been an enduring cooperative coalition unlike the seasonal opposition alliance, thriving only as a general election was advancing.

In the BN, even the smallest of component parties were accorded due attention by each having three representatives on the Supreme Council to air views and bring up their problems.

The BN government made sure that this arrangement flourished, he said.

Citing the Indian-based MIC as an example, Dr Mahathir said the MIC could still represent several constituencies because it had the support of the other component parties despite Indians being the minority electorate in any given seat.

"We willingly support the MIC candidates in specific constituencies because we're confident that MIC members elsewhere will likewise support Umno and the other BN components.

"This clearly shows the soundness of the BN system which takes care of the needs of all the communities," said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said it was not yet time for the country to have a one party government as this could only raise concern among the minority over their fate should the leadership of the ruling party be monopolised by a single community.

He said now that the opposition parties have come to appreciate this reality, even they wanted to copy the BN system.

In the 1990 general election, the opposition put up a tri-partite front comprising Parti Melayu Semangat 46, PAS and the DAP but even then such a pact crumbled after the polls, he said.

As the coming general election drew near, a yet another opposition alliance had come into being, this time made up of PAS, DAP, Keadilan and Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia, he said.

Dr Mahathir described the alliance as an insincere union because the opposition parties involved waited until the general election was around the corner to work out a pact among them.

The prime minister also said the BN machinery was all set to face the general election which could be called anytime now.

On prospective BN candidates, the prime minister said BN election candidates were actually faceless in the sense that their uppermost concern was to secure victory for the BN's symbol, a weighing scale.

"They are actually faceless. The BN candidate's face is the symbol of

the scale. The most important thing is that the electorate vote for the candidate using the symbol irrespective of who he is," said Dr Mahathir.

About 1,500 Selangor BN leaders and supporters attended the gathering.

Also present were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar, Information Minister and Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Seri Onn Ismail.

Earlier, the prime minister met Selangor Umno leaders at the state Umno liaison committee headquarters here.

-- BERNAMA

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