

PM: BN wants larger majority

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This will prove Pas' influence has waned

By Balan Moses

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Barisan Nasional is working towards a larger majority in the Teluk Kemang by-election on June 10 to prove that the trend of victories for the Opposition during the general election had ended.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the BN would prove that Pas' influence had waned after the Nov 29 polls.

"In the Teluk Kemang by-election, I am confident that we can win but anything can happen. But God-willing, we will win with a bigger majority," the Prime Minister told a Press conference after opening the MIC general assembly.

He said the Opposition felt that the 1999 general election results were a trend towards a bigger win for them in other elections.

"But the results were because of Pas's malicious rumours and use of DAP and Keadilan for its own selfish purpose," he added.

He said Pas did not have the

same kind of influence now.

On recent street demonstrations, he said it was to mark former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's anniversary of being jailed.

However, he said Keadilan Deputy President Dr Chandra Muzaffar and party president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail did not support it.

"On the other hand, it seemed Anwar gave the instruction to have a big demonstration hoping it would turn violent."

When asked why there was no response to attacks on the Internet against him, Dr Mahathir said there was no way of attacking them.

"They are very good with the Internet, anonymous letters, They are better than anybody else in the world.

"They are a class by themselves in inventing stories . . . like the death of the Prime Minister, saying the PM fell off the horse.... poisoning and so many others," he said.

Tuesday is nomination day for the by-election which was called following the death of S. Anpalangan who defeated the DAP's N. Gopalakrishnan in the last general election.

BN candidate S. Sothinathan, political secretary to Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, will face Keadilan information head Ruslan Kassim.

Asked if a BN win would prove that the victory in the Sanggang by-election was not a fluke, he said: "No way it was a fluke."

The Prime Minister said it appeared that younger Keadilan members were disillusioned with party chief Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

This was because the party was seen to be championing the cause of one person instead of reformation as it claimed to, he said.

On whether he would attend the funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on June 8, he said he would be in Japan for another meeting and may do so.