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Mahathir-Lunas

DAP TRAPPED IN THE SCHEMINGS OF PAS AND KEADILAN, SAYS PM

LANGKAWI, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the DAP has actually been trapped in the schemings of PAS and Keadilan that it was forced to withdraw from contesting in the Lunas by-election.

Dr Mahathir felt that the future of the DAP was also bleak as the party had been deceived by its two allies in the Alternative Front.

"Keadilan is the catalyst and PAS gets the most benefit as even Keadilan will not be able to (get the seat) like in the last election as it'll have two seats out of the 50 (seats in the state assembly)," he said.

"The main beneficiary is PAS," he told reporters after the last session of the leaders' dialogue in the Langkawi International Dialogue (LID), here.

The prime minister said that PAS, Keadilan and DAP want certain constituencies for themselves whereas for the DAP, the party knew it could not win in Lunas but realised that if it gives up all the constituency, "what will it get".

"This time I am certain Keadilan will play up racial issues...that it why it could convince the DAP to withdraw," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this was because in a constituency with Chinese majority, supporters of the party would certainly vote for PAS or Keadilan whereas in a constituency with a small number of Malays voters, the "DAP cannot penetrate".

In the Lunas by-election, Dr Mahathir was confident that Keadilan would play up racial issues after having succeeded in convincing the DAP to withdraw, with the hope of reducing the majority for the Barisan Nasional (BN).

"But I do not think it can win there but the ill intention is certainly there, to split the Malays... somehow or other to split the Malays," he said.

The Lunas state constituency is traditionally a BN stronghold in Kedah. In the last general election, the late Dr Joe Fernandez obtained a majority of 4,700 votes.

He obtained 9,760 votes to defeat M.Kathiravelo (DAP) who obtained 5,060 votes, Ibrahim Mohamed Rashidi (Independent) who obtained 2,158 votes and N.Letchumanan (Independent) who obtained 87 votes.

The Lunas by-election will be a three-corner fight between the BN's S.Anthonysamy, Keadilan's Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and N.Letchumanan, an Independent.

Dr Mahathir said that he was confident the BN would win the seat but maybe with a reduced majority like in Teluk Kemang.

"We may see a reduced (majority) like what happened in Teluk Kemang. Normally, in contests there, an Indian candidate faces an Indian candidate and as such, the Malays will support the BN," he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped that the DAP would be able to accept all this because in the coming elections, the party would get fewer seats as in most of the constituencies, the majority of voters would be the Malays.

"...as such, the number of DAP's constituencies will be smaller since where there are many Malays, they will not vote for the DAP and PAS will be the one to stand to benefit, and secondly Keadilan. The DAP will be left out," he said.

He said that the DAP cannot afford to withdraw from the opposition pact

as it will diminish altogether. "It will be left by itself," he said.

Earlier, the opposition alliance was reported to be faced with a crisis over the selection of the candidate to be fielded in the by-election, resulting in Keadilan vice president Tian Chua tendering his resignation.

Dr Mahathir felt that Keadilan does not actually want to win the seat but their earnest intention was to split the Malays and to raise various issues pertaining to the Malays.

The prime minister reminded Umno supporters of the cooperation in the BN and for them to give their support to the MIC candidate as this was the style of the BN.

"Let's not forget that in some constituencies the Indian or Chinese voters managed to ensure success for Umno and therefore in certain constituencies Umno supporters must give their support to a MIC candidate. In one constituency we get the support of the minority, in others, we give our support," he said.

Replying to a question, Dr Mahathir said that the Malay votes would not necessarily determine victory for the BN in Lunas even though their number was large.

If they were split, they would not account for much, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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