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Mahathir-Warning

BN MAY WIN WITH BIGGER MAJORITY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

SHAH ALAM, May 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad sounded a warning to the opposition parties today that the Barisan Nasional (BN) may win with a bigger majority in the next general election.

"The opposition parties should be afraid because their time will come soon," the prime minister said at Unmo's 56th anniversary celebrations at Stadium Malawati, here.

He said that in 1999 "when the people hated the government" the BN was prepared to hold the general election and won with a three-quarter majority in the Dewan Rakyat.

"This time, people say that we are weak and will fall. Wait for another election.

"To the opposition parties, the people and issues that you have made use of are no longer issues in our country," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president and BN chairman, said the BN government led by Umno was not afraid to hold the election at any time.

He said that since Independence, 10 general elections had been held before the expiry of the term of the ruling party.

Referring to the 15,000-strong crowd that had turned up for the celebrations and their high spirit, Dr Mahathir said: "Look at today's gathering, wait and see."

He also said that Umno, with its partners in the BN, had the efficiency and ability to develop the country.

It was a misconception to assume that any government could develop the country like the BN government.

"That is shallow, stupid thinking from a frog under the coconut shell," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that some countries had gained independence at about the same time as Malaysia but had not achieved development and were even more backward than when they were under colonial rule.

He said that although there were many factors that could cause racial disunity the BN government was able to overcome them.

"In the BN we don't try to solve problems through violent and irresponsible means. Instead we negotiate nicely," he said.

He likened the BN's way of solving problems to pulling a thread through flour where the thread would be safe and the flour would fall back into place.

Later, at a media conference, he said the BN would do whatever it could to ensure victory in the next general election but everything rested in God's hands.

Asked whether the general election would be held at any time, he said: "You come to me one by one, I will tell."

Present at the gathering were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Umno leaders and several BN component leaders including MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

-- BERNAMA

MAD ZS JK