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PM: Opposition should carry out clean by-election campaign

ALOR STAR, Fri. - The Opposition should carry out a clean campaign and refrain from making personal attacks or using vulgarities during the Anak Bukit and Pendang by-elections, the Prime Minister said today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there was no point for anyone to hurl abuse just because they had differing opinions.

"Why curse others? It's not good and it's not our way.

"I don't want Umno (supporters) to resort to such things. If others do it, let it be as God will punish them. We don't have to do anything," he said to some 10,000 people who had gathered to welcome him at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport, in Kepala Batas, near here.

Relating how certain Opposition leaders had cursed him and called him names, he said someone had also accused him of trying to be God.

"That person said I want to be God and a mad one at that.

"I supposed this is the first time that God wants to resign," he said, referring to his decision to step down as Prime Minister in October next year.

He said such statements reflected how the Opposition was talking nonsense to win votes.

"Wahai Mat Sabu (Kuala Kedah MP Mohd Sabu), janganlah. Bila nak cakap ingat pada Allah. Jangan kita maki, jangan cakap bohong," he said.

(Mat Sabu, don't do that. Think of Allah whenever you want to speak.

Let's not swear and tell lies.)

He reminded the people of the importance of choosing a representative who could serve them.

He said it was useless to elect someone who could only make empty promises.

The Anak Bukit and Pendang by-elections will be held simultaneously, with nominations set for next Wednesday and polling on July 18.

The seats fell vacant following the death of Pas president Datuk Fadzil Mohd Noor on June 23. He won both seats in the 1999 general election.

Speaking at a Press conference in Jitra, Dr Mahathir said BN candidates had yet to be finalised.

"We will announce them when the time comes. We are now evaluating the candidates," he said.

In jest, he said there were some 20 candidates and they could also write to him.

An announcement on the candidates is expected to be made by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi later.

Asked how the by-election results would affect the next general election, Dr Mahathir said he was not sure.

However, he said there were clear indications that people's support for Umno and the Government had increased.

Earlier in his speech, at the laying of the foundation stone for the Kubang Pasu District complex, he said BN had never fought with anyone nor hurled curses or uttered profanities to win support.