

13 SEP 2002

Mahathir-Reason

DR MAHATHIR EXPLAINS REASON FOR NOT SEEKING RE-ELECTION

BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Sept 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that his intention not to seek re-election in the next general election is because he wants to retire "cleanly".

"I want to retire cleanly and not be involved in anything after my retirement," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that he had not conveyed his intention to the Umno Supreme Council.

He was speaking at a media conference after opening the Asian Composite Manufacturing Sdn Bhd plant here.

"Supreme Council (members) have to step down sometimes. I can't be here forever," he said.

The Prime Minister said that his role would be to continue campaigning "very hard" for the Barisan Nasional (BN) all over the country in the next general election.

Dr Mahathir, who has been Member of Parliament for Kubang Pasu since 1974, announced that he would not contest in the next general election at a function in Alor Setar earlier today.

The Prime Minister was also asked to comment on a police report lodged on Wednesday by Puteri Umno member Zalilah alias Elly Yusof against Puteri Umno pro tem chief Azalina Othman Said over alleged misappropriation and mismanagement of properties and funds of the movement.

To this, Dr Mahathir said Umno members should refer any complaints to the party's Management Committee instead of lodging police reports.

"I think Puteri Umno (members) still don't understand this. They can always refer to the Management Committee so that the committee can investigate whatever complaints they have including malpractices in the party," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that Umno itself does not want people who misappropriated funds to be leaders in the party.

Responding to other questions, Dr Mahathir said that he does not believe that PAS was getting stronger in Kedah.

"They won the by-election because they had cheated by shifting voters from other areas into the Anak Bukit state constituency.

"...If you take 2,000 voters whom they have moved to the Anak Bukit area away, surely the Barisan Nasional would have won the by-election," he said.

The Anak Bukit state and Pendang parliamentary by-elections in Kedah were held in July following the death of PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor, who held both seats.

The BN won the Pendang seat with a 283-vote majority but lost in Anak Bukit by 508 votes.

Dr Mahathir also said that ambiguities in voter registration which among others enable voters to cast their ballots in another constituency instead of the constituencies where they live should be rectified.

"Somebody is meddling with the voter registration process," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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