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Mahathir-Puteri

DR MAHATHIR PLACES HIGH HOPES ON PUTERI UMNO

BANGI, April 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he placed high hopes on Puteri Umno Malaysia in ensuring victory for Barisan Nasional in the next election including efforts to recapture Kelantan and Terengganu.

The Prime Minister said it was clear that Puteri Umno was capable of wooing many voters.

"Puteri's role is significant and I hope Puteri will strive as it had done in Ketari (by-election) recently and also in other areas," he said in a question and answer session when closing a women's course organised by Puteri Umno, here today.

He said they should not fear the opposition parties and instead draw up strategies to take the offensive because "attack is the best form of defence".

Dr Mahathir said various slanders had been hurled at him but a politician must have "thick skin" in facing the onslaught from the opposition.

Responding to a question, he said continuous efforts must be made to rid Umno of negative elements.

Dr Mahathir said he regretted that there were people who joined the party in the hope of getting certain rewards without championing the actual cause of the party to uplift the dignity of the Malays.

"I am sad when there are people who say 'I don't get anything at all although I've been in Umno for 20 years'," he said.

To another question on the exploitation of the word "Islam", Dr Mahathir said the government would continue to explain to the people that PAS, which uses the word in its name, was not a truly Islamic party.

"However, many people have realised that PAS is not Islam and that Islam is not PAS," he said.

On the anti-government sentiments among some students despite getting educational opportunities and scholarship from the government, Dr Mahathir said the government certainly did not like the attitude of these students who "bit the hand that feeds them".

He said the government gave much emphasis on education as shown in the percentage of annual allocation for education which reached 20 per cent.

"Yet there are students who condemn the government. When the hand of the one who gives help is bitten, certainly we don't approve of such behaviour," he said.

Responding to another question, Dr Mahathir said he was confident Malaysia would achieve the developed nation status by the year 2020 but at the same time feared about the capability of the Malays to emerge as a developed race.

However, the Prime Minister said that by possessing the right values and culture, the Malays could also achieve the desired development.

-- BERNAMA

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