

09/03/2002

Dr M: BN set to perform better

Abdul Razak Ahmad; Ridzal A. Latiff

SIK, Fri. - Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident the coalition will perform better in the next general election.

Dr Mahathir, who is Prime Minister and Umno president, said voters who had in the past turned away from Umno were returning to the party.

"It's not that we would call for a general election now, but if were to hold it any time from now, our performance will be better than in 1999.

"I have observed how there is now a greater awareness (among voters) and many who had in the past separated from Umno have now returned, and this is a good sign," he said after attending a meet-the-people session at the Sik District Council padang here.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked about the response he received during his visit to the opposition-held constituency. Pas life member Prof Datuk Shahnnon Ahmad is the Sik MP.

Dr Mahathir and Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who was on a one-day visit to Kedah today, arrived in Alor Star this morning.

After attending a BN gathering in Kubang Pasu, the Prime Minister and Dr Siti Hasmah boarded a helicopter to Sik. They landed at the Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama Sik at 12.50pm. A large crowd of well-wishers greeted them on arrival.

After Friday prayers and lunch at the town mosque, Dr Mahathir, joined by Dr Siti Hasmah, attended a meet-the-people session. A large crowd gathered at the venue and greeted the Prime Minister.

The meet-the-people gathering was organised by the Kedah Government. Also present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, the religious adviser to the Prime Minister and former Sik MP.

"I found the response here extraordinary compared to my last visit here, where not many attended the function which was held in a hall. From the moment we landed, right through Friday prayers, there was a continuous show of support by local people, for which I am thankful," said Dr Mahathir.

Earlier in his speech at the gathering, Dr Mahathir advised Sik residents not to repeat the mistake of voting in an opposition MP from Pas.

Dr Mahathir said Pas used slander and incited hatred to draw support when such tactics only caused Malay Muslims in the country to be divided.

"This is how Pas tries to win elections, so we must not support this impudent party, this party which betrays Muslims and Malays in general."

Dr Mahathir said the pathetic state of affairs of Muslims worldwide, who were being oppressed openly by their enemies, was because Muslims were divided.

He said Pas, in slandering and inciting hatred among Muslims, was trying to disunite the ummah.

He said although Pas often accused Umno of engaging in political stage-acting (sandiwara), their own plans to re-enact the Memali tragedy and to distribute the video recording was proof that it was Pas who were engaging in sandiwara.

news@nstp.com.my

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