

01 SEP 2002
BN-Election
NEXT POLLS CRUCIAL FOR BN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- The next general election, to be held by 2004, would be one of the most important wars ever fought by the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN), BN Youth head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said today.

"The next general election would be one of the most important wars, not only for the BN but also for future generations. For this we have to be ready to fight the dirty tactic of the opposition as only the BN can guarantee the future of this country," he said.

He said the 14 BN component parties, whether they like it or not, must be fully prepared to face this war as the opposition was willing to go to any length to gain control of the country.

"They (opposition parties) are looking at temporary gains but we look not only at the present but also the future...we have to be prepared for the war," he told reporters after opening the People's Progressive Party (PPP) Youth annual general assembly here.

He said the coalition's top leadership had asked all component parties to gear up for the national polls and all the 14 parties were now fine-tuning their election machinery.

He said any differences among groups in component parties should be set aside so that they could concentrate on preparing for the general election.

"Minor internal problems should be solved using the party's internal avenues...they have their own formulas to solve their problems so it is only good that all problems are settled before we go to war," he said.

However, Hishammuddin said internal disputes in some BN parties would not erode support for the coalition, which has been at the helm of the country since it gained independence 45 years ago.

On the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to the Election Commission (EC) to remove phantom voters from the electoral rolls, he said the EC should take the necessary steps to ensure the voters' list was clean.

"We had information that PAS brought in busloads of voters from outside on the eve of the by-election in Anak Bukit. Some voters registered there suddenly found their names not in the election rolls," he said.

Commenting on Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's statement that men who abandoned their wives should be whipped, Hishammuddin said this was another example of PAS leaders going to the extreme to gain political mileage.

Hishammuddin also said Malaysians, in the spirit of Merdeka, should reflect on the country's bitter struggle when it was fighting for independence.

"Do not at anytime think we are out of the woods. We are not as there are some among us who want to drag us back to the dark past where we suffered and worked for others," he said.

-- BERNAMA
SR AT HS YBY