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DAP-Prediction

DAP NOW PREDICTS GENERAL ELECTION IN FIRST QUARTER OF 2004

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 17 (Bernama) -- The DAP expects the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government to call for the general election in the first quarter of 2004, DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock said today.

He said the election was expected to be held "either in March or April next year".

"This is to ensure that they (BN) can seize the opportunity to come out with a new 'Image Card'," he said when opening the DAP Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory annual convention here.

He reasoned that when Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad took office in 1981 as the nation's fourth Prime Minister, the BN came up with the slogan 'Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy' to garner the people's support. "It had successfully raised hopes and expectation among the people and helped BN to score its big victory in the 1982 general election," he said.

Likewise, Kerk said, when Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi takes over as the nation's fifth Prime Minister when Dr Mahathir retires in October, he believed the BN would also do a similar 'Image Card' building, to gain support.

He said the BN would exploit the hope of the promise of a new leadership for an efficient and trustworthy government by using some new slogans and concepts.

"This therefore means that in all probability, the next general election will be held in March next year as Datuk Seri Abdullah will definitely need at least three months to build up his new image and bring about new hopes of his new premiership before he goes to the polls to seek the people's mandate," he said.

Speaking to reporters later, Kerk said that DAP was prepared to resume negotiations on the allocation of seats with the pro tem Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) if two concerns expressed by DAP to PKR president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail were addressed.

He said the two concerns were "the persistent leaking out of negotiation details, and negative public comments by PKR leaders" against the DAP.

-- BERNAMA

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