

15 SEP 2003

Mahathir-PAS

KELANTAN UMNO HAS GOOD CHANCE IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, SAYS PM

KOTA BAHARU, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Kelantan Umno has a good chance to recapture the state government in the next general election as PAS has run out of issues against the party.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said that the present time and situation was ideal for Umno to beat PAS in Kelantan after being defeated in three consecutive general elections since 1990.

He hoped that the Kelantan Umno would exploit PAS' glaring weaknesses at present.

"PAS' weaknesses (are) they have no issues, when they make promises, they break their promises. Now, they're saying they need not outline what kind of Islamic state that they want, saying ours isn't but who knows what kind of Islamic state theirs is," he said after chairing the Kelantan Umno liaison meeting in conjunction with his visit to Kelantan.

Dr Mahathir said that the Kelantan Umno could achieve overwhelming success if its leaders heed his message, which is to "strongly uphold the principles of Umno's struggles, Insyah-Allah success is assured".

He said that PAS had also run out of issues to fight Umno with PAS leaders making statements to dispute that Malaysia was an Islamic state whereas the world had recognised Malaysia as an Islamic state.

"The world acknowledged Malaysia not only as an Islamic state but a model for Islamic countries.

"But PAS has a different definition. Even the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar (Dr Sayed Mohammad Tantawi) is not a match for Hadi (Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang). Actually, Hadi should have been a caliph in this world," he said.

Dr Mahathir was referring to a statement by Abdul Hadi, the PAS president, who disputed Dr Tantawi who acknowledged Malaysia as an Islamic state on the grounds that the world renowned ulama has been appointed by the Egyptian government and not by the ulamas or academics of the Al-Azhar University.

The Prime Minister said that Umno's position was also improving due to the strengthened unity of its leaders and judging by the very warm welcome accorded him by the people of Kelantan during his visit to the state this time.

"During this visit, I see a large number of people, all waving at me. I believe a few did try to make trouble, to jeer, but the others were very supportive," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who steps down next month, however said he was sad that as he was ending his tenure, Kelantan had failed to be administered properly.

"I'm sad because Kelantan has many Malays who are brilliant, extremely hardworking and very capable. In my office they have taken up the various posts because in Kelantan there are no jobs.

"Most of the successful officers and businessmen are from Kelantan. Unfortunately, they cannot administer Kelantan themselves. That makes me sad," he said.

Commenting on PAS' intention to wrest more parliamentary seats in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said: "They (PAS) always make projection to win more seats.

"In 1999, they rode on people faced with misfortune. They used them, riding hard and won while those people lost, serves them right," he said.

On the intention of the PAS-led Kelantan government to set up a

university in the state, the Prime Minister said he did not think that the party would be able to do so.

"I don't think so, as even they themselves are immoral, they pray to God who is a thug, how are we to accept them. They say God uses obscenity, if they consider God as using obscenity and (PAS MP Datuk) Shahnnon Ahmad also uses obscenity, then in their university, their students will also use obscenity, therefore lacking in moral values," he said.

Referring to the issue of clean water supply in Kelantan, the Prime Minister gave an assurance that the federal government would strive to ensure that the people of Kelantan enjoy clean water supply even though the state was ruled by the opposition.

He however expressed disappointment over the attitude of state PAS leaders who were prepared to admit to the people that it was the party which was responsible in providing such facility whereas the federal government had provided various assistance.

"The sad thing is that we provide while others admitted doing so," he said, referring to the move by the federal government to provide a special grant of RM600 million to Kelantan several years ago to improve the quality of water supply to the state following complaints by the people of Kelantan that they were not getting piped water supply due to low water pressure.

Asked to comment on the front page report in a newspaper today on the exposure by the Royal Customs Department of a smuggling syndicate towkay with savings of up to RM400 million overseas derived from his illegal activities, Dr Mahathir said that action must be taken if there were proof of such activities.

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