

19 JAN 2003

Mustapa-PAS

2003, YEAR OF RECKONING FOR PAS, RISE OF KELANTAN UMNO

KOTA BAHARU, Jan 19 (Bernama) -- This is the year of reckoning for PAS and the rise of Umno in Kelantan with the eventual return of the state to its fold in the coming general election, Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said today.

The Kelantan Umno Chief said Kelantan Umno was now more stable and strong compared to the situation in November 1999 when the last general election was held.

"In view of this prevailing situation PAS will look for all kinds of ploys to create doubts among the people over the rise of Umno in the state," he told reporters after meeting with Post Graduate Scheme officers here.

Mustapa said this when asked for his views on the banners that have appeared in parts of Kota Baharu, which read "Ya! changes have begun, Young Umno against Older Umno." The banners were believed to have been put up by PAS.

The banners came up after the Prime Minister and Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced changes in the State Umno leadership on Thursday.

Dr Mahathir appointed Kota Baharu Umno head Zaid Ibrahim as the new Kelantan Umno deputy head replacing Datuk Annuar Musa (Peringat Umno head) and retaining Mustapa as State Umno Chief.

Mustapa said PAS leaders always fished in troubled waters and that had been their work all the time but Kelantan Umno was not in the least perturbed by their actions.

He said in Kelantan Umno there were no old or new leaders as implied by PAS.

"Changes are taking place but we are not sidelining anyone. We want everyone's cooperation. Anyone who can work can continue to do so," he said.

He said all Umno divisions in Kelantan were functioning normally and divisional heads were discharging their duties while the State Liaison Committee was merely coordinating party activities.

On the Education Ministry's offer to students of the Public Religious School (SAR) that they join national schools, Mustapa said PAS was using this to confuse the people and slandering Umno by claiming that it was restricting the expansion of Islam.

Mustapa said he had received reports that that in their dawn religious talk in mosques certain imams were saying "after this we won't even be allowed to propagate Islam in the mosques."

PAS was doing this to serve its political interests for there were PAS leaders who had sent their children for overseas education even to England while the kampung folks were being asked to send their children to the shanty public religious schools, he added.

Meanwhile in TUMPAT, new State Umno Secretary Nawawi Jusoh said Kelantan Umno would draw up an action plan to wrest control of the state through the ballot box.

He said the plan would be implemented at all levels up to the day when the general election was held.

Issues such as that surrounding the SAR would be explained to the people so that they would not be confused by PAS propaganda.

Nawawi said support for PAS had eroded lately through the implementation of various Federal poverty-eradication programmes.

The people were now realising that they should support Umno, he added.
--BERNAMA
WM BD AAM