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Mahathir-PBS

BN'S STRENGTH IN FACING SABAH ELECTION BOOSTED BY THE PBS, SAYS PM

KOTA KINABALU, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is confident of increased support for the state Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next election following the move by Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) to rejoin the BN.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said that this was because support for the BN was now total and "there's no opposition party that can undermine its strength".

However, he called on the people in the state to reject the Independents who may run in the election merely to create distraction or to seek attention for themselves.

"I hope that the people of Sabah will not be deceived by the tactics of the Independents," he said when opening the 18th PBS Congress at the Hongkod Koisaan in Penampang near here today.

Dr Mahathir was happy that the PBS had returned to the BN fold, saying "the PBS is not an opponent, only that sometimes there are differences of opinion".

"In politics, sometimes we are foes...sometimes we are friends and those who are friends become foes but don't think that this is not unusual.

"Actually, if we were to observe the situation in other countries, when a party is the enemy of another party, this enmity will climax into clashes, sometimes they even wage war and resort to killings," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir said, in Malaysia, the various races in Malaysia had adopted a moderate stand and "this is why even though we have differing views, we can live together and we can become friends again".

"Our country Malaysia is very much blessed because if we notice in other countries where there have a multi-ethnic society, they are never peaceful and certainly development cannot be carried out.

"Even though there are obvious differences in Malaysia, our country is peaceful because we believe in sharing...no one wish to take everything for himself...the power and wealth in the country are all ours," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the power-sharing concept practised by the BN was reflected in the participation of all the races in developing the country, ensuring peace and political stability.

"We'd much rather share because through sharing, our country will become peaceful, grow and prosper, expanding the portions that belong to all of us.

"Our sharing (concept) is not mere pretence of sharing but sharing in reality," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that for instance, all the 14 BN component parties, whether big or small, have each three representatives at the BN meetings and they were free to express their opinions.

He said that the sharing concept had been practised since the Alliance whereby the three major races in the peninsula -- the Malays, Chinese and Indians -- agreed to share power in the interest of all the races.

He said that the country might not have attained independence in 1957 if the major races in the peninsula were not united, and after Malaysia came into being, the sharing concept was extended to Sabah and Sarawak.

"We did not take over Sabah and Sarawak but we share a bigger Malaysia between the major races (in the peninsula) and the Kadazandusun Muruts, Bajaus and Ibans (in Sarawak)," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that racial unity was the foundation of the BN's main

struggle and as such, support for the BN was very strong throughout the country.

"It's never our intention to take away the rights of anyone but we need to make sacrifices in the general interest and we realise that others also have to make sacrifices in our interest," he said.

He said that various quarters especially the Chinese community felt suspicious when he was appointed Prime Minister about 22 years ago due to fear of oppression.

"At that time, I wasn't popular and now their fear has been found to be baseless and unfounded.

"We in Malaysia are all for unity and we're not selfish...we're prepared to share for our common good," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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