

19 APR 2003

Umno-Kelantan

UMNO CONFIDENT TO RETAIN KELANTAN IN NEXT ELECTION

PASIR PUTEH, April 19 (Bernama) -- Kelantan Umno can wrest the state from PAS in the coming general election if 101,150 of the party's election machinery members strive to recruit more voters.

Datuk Dusuki Ahmad, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's political secretary, said members from the 2,023 Umno branches in the state had to work hard towards achieving the objective.

"This is sufficient to rule Kelantan," he told reporters after opening the Pasir Puteh Umno Division Youth and Puteri delegates meeting here today.

Dusuki said according to rough estimates only 75 per cent or 491,701 of the 655,602 voters would cast their votes.

In the last three elections Umno was defeated because of the emergence of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 in 1990 and 1995, and in 1999 due to former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's crisis.

In the coming general election, these issues are not influencing factors and it will be an advantage to Umno, he said.

The strong support from the 28,000 teachers in all villages under the Education Ministry, the network of 19,000 petty traders, who obtained interest-free loans from Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia and Community Development Department (Kemas) staff would be an extra boost for Umno, he said.

Besides, PAS's position is weak as it failed to develop the state after 13 years in power.

Dusuki said compared to PAS rule under the late Datuk Asri Muda, the state enjoyed some progress like the construction of the Sultan Yahya Petra bridge over Sungai Kelantan.

-- BERNAMA

WM BD VP