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Election-Kubang Pasu

BN SEES NO MAJOR PROBLEMS IN RETAINING KUBANG PASU

JITRA, March 15 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) sees no major problems in its bid to retain Kubang Pasu, the parliamentary seat held by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for 30 years.

The decision by the former prime minister not to seek re-election will not jeopardise support for the BN, said Kubang Pasu BN Election Director Tan Sri Osman Aroff.

"Actually, this is a test to Kubang Pasu voters, especially the BN supporters," he said when met by Bernama.

He said the respect for Dr Mahathir's leadership had enabled the BN to win the seat in the past in spite of the challenge by PAS.

Osman said he believed the BN supporters in Kubang Pasu would continue to give the same support as they did when Dr Mahathir contested the seat.

In the 1999 general election, Dr Mahathir defeated Subky Abdul Latiff of PAS with a majority of 10,138 votes when he polled 22,399 votes against 12,261 votes by his opponents.

Osman, a former Kedah Menteri Besar and Jitra assemblyman, admitted that there were some minor internal problems relating to the selection of candidates but it was nothing unusual in any election.

"Many people might assume that during the time of Tun Dr Mahathir, the BN machinery received all kinds of assistance from outside, but the fact is that it was Kubang Pasu BN election machinery that did the work, not outsiders," he said.

He said that even though the BN was confident of retaining the seat, it did not underestimate the opposition.

The seat is being contested by Datuk Mohd Johari Baharom, who is also a political secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mohd Johari, when met, said he was encouraged by the support given to him by Umno members and the BN.

He believed the BN candidates in the two state seats in Kubang

Pasu,
Prof Dr Othman Ishak (Jitra) and newcomer Khalidah Adibah Ayob
(Bukit Kayu
Hitam) also enjoyed the same support.

"The basic infrastructure is there in Kubang Pasu. We need only
to
develop it and this can only be realised by giving the mandate to
the BN,"
said Mohd Johari who will be challenged by Dr Abdul Isa Ismail of
PAS.

He said there was a need to continue the work left by Dr
Mahathir for
the future and development of the Malays in particular.

BN supporters met by Bernama also expressed confident of
retaining
Kubang Pasu, Jitra and Bukit Kayu Hitam seats.

"PAS needs more than a miracle to win. We have been preparing
for this
for a very long time," said a BN supporter, Shaari Kassim, 50, from
Jitra.

But a PAS supporter said, "We'll see who wins and who loses. If
we win,
it will be a bonus because it's a BN stronghold for over 30 years,"
he
said.

Meanwhile Dr Abdul Isa, PAS candidate for Kubang Pasu, believed
he had
as much chance as Mohd Johari to win the seat.

"PAS is aware that there are no major issues that can be
capitalised in
this election but we have other issues such as poverty and education
to
help us in our campaign," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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