

04 MAR 2004
Election-Mahathir
BN WILL WIN BIG IN POLLS, SAYS DR M

SHAH ALAM, March 4 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) will be returned to power with a resounding victory in the upcoming general election as the opposition cannot exploit the "Hate Mahathir" issue in the election campaign, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the issue should no longer be the reason for the people not to vote for the BN as he was no longer in the government and the party.

Moreover, those who hated him before have now returned to Umno, he said.

"The BN will win big because the opposition cannot play on certain issues because the hatred towards me will no longer influence the people not to support the BN.

"The time I chose to retire is very good timing," he told reporters after visiting The Royal Mint of Malaysia, here.

Dr Mahathir said he was sure there were people who hated him as there was no human being who is likeable by all.

"I am an ordinary person, I am quite sure quite a lot of people hate me. That's normal. I accept this. I cannot please everybody," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the timing of the soon-to-be-held 11th general election was appropriate given the country's sound economic climate and the people's acceptance of Abdullah's leadership.

He said he would help in the election campaign in Kedah and was prepared to go to other places if he was invited.

"If I'm needed, I'll go everywhere but I will not go by myself because I don't want to be accused of trespassing," he said.

Dr Mahathir said he believed PAS would continue to use the "heaven" issue to fish for votes in the election.

He said a person cannot go to heaven merely by supporting a political party and certain individuals.

"How can a person who murders and steals but when in a election, he

votes for PAS. he enters into heaven," he said.

Dr Mahathir also reminded elected representatives that they would not remain so for life but instead give an opportunity to others.

"Blocking the opportunities of others will disappoint many people and

can erode the support of the party," he added.

-- BERNAMA

LES TOM