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Dr M: I want a huge win for Barisan in Kedah

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ALOR STAR, Sat. - Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has demanded a gift from the State Barisan Nasional - a resounding win for the ruling party in Kedah.

Instead of the praise and thanks often heaped on him for his long years of service as Prime Minister, he said it would be better to win back seats lost to the Opposition.

"The best gratitude I can receive is a huge victory for Barisan Nasional in Kedah. This is the gift I am asking for. Even if it is not being offered to me, I am demanding it," he told a meeting packed with BN workers and leaders.

Earlier, the former Prime Minister had admitted to being a little embarrassed that BN had come close to losing the State while he was in office. He said he was often in a quandary when faced with questions about how BN was faring in the State now.

"I cannot comfortably say that we will win and it would be even more embarrassing to say that we will lose."

Dr Mahathir asked leaders and party workers to help BN to regain its honour in the State. Pas holds 12 state seats and seven parliamentary seats in Kedah, while Keadilan has one state seat. Kedah is the only BN-controlled State in which it does not have a two-thirds majority.

Dr Mahathir, who is also adviser to the BN in Kedah, promised to campaign for candidates standing for parliamentary and state seats in Kubang Pasu.

He said it was his way of showing gratitude to the thousands who had worked to ensure the success of his own campaign when he was MP for Kubang Pasu.

"I am indebted to the people in my constituency who worked for my win. I will work hard to ensure that they enjoy the same success."

In his hour-long speech, Dr Mahathir spoke at length on how divisions in Umno could bring failure to the party and BN in the general election.

Urging Umno members not to sabotage the chances of candidates, he said: "Actually, Umno is very strong, even in Kelantan. Everyone likes Umno. However, there are those who will sabotage candidates when they are not selected."

Dr Mahathir also reminded component parties of BN to support each other.

He asked that party members refrain from questioning the allocation of seats and realise that only through give-and-take and mutual support could BN score victories.

Dr Mahathir also commented on religious issues that Pas was likely to raise. Using the colloquial term "tinas", which means to squash, he expressed confidence that Umno could tackle these issues easily.

Present at the meeting were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister and Kulim MP Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, State Executive Councillors and leaders of BN component parties.