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Two-thirds certain for BN, says Dr Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that the Barisan Nasional would be returned to power with a two-thirds majority in the general election and perform "better than in 1999".

He said the BN's chances in Opposition-held States Terengganu and Kelantan were "good", as the people were no longer disgruntled over the 1998 sacking of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"They exploited the issue of Anwar Ibrahim in 1999, but now people have accepted that what was done was right," he told reporters after a Press conference on the Malaysia Microchip (MM Chip) at Nikko Hotel here.

Dr Mahathir light-heartedly fielded questions on the elections, but was firm on his decision to vacate his Kubang Pasu seat in Kedah.

"Definitely not," was his response to a query on whether he would be contesting.

"What about your seat?" a reporter asked.

"My seat? My seat ada di rumah lah (is at home)," he said, to laughter from all present.

He said the disposition of the Kubang Pasu seat would be up to Umno, and he would accept "anything and anyone" the party chose.

"I do not want to contest anymore," he affirmed. "My time is over."

On allegations by the Opposition that he still wielded power behind the scenes, Dr Mahathir laughed heartily and said: "If that is what they imagine, then let them imagine whatever."