

## **Stop flashing your wealth, Mahathir tells BN leaders**

**Malaysiakini.com**

**September 22, 2011**

Change your image and do not flash your wealth in order to change the perception that the ruling coalition is corrupt, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad told BN leaders today.

Addressing 400 of them in Kuala Selangor, including BN elected representatives, the veteran leader said the coalition would otherwise continue to be perceived as "disgusting".

"I find that many view (BN) as disgusting and that they openly state their rejection of the BN.

"If we analyse this, we find this is because we no longer struggle to form the government, but to reap personal benefits," Mahathir said.

Besides flashing their wealth by suddenly building "RM7 or RM8 million houses", which they previously could not afford, elected representatives also felt the need to "buy support".

Speaking at a BN State Assembly Backbenchers Club event, Mahathir said BN representatives said they needed to "get contracts and raise their income" as "their supporters demand money".

### **'To be popular, one buys people'**

"To be popular, one buys people, but no amount of money is enough... and in the end, the society becomes corrupt.

"The society then views Umno and other component parties (as) corrupt as the leaders got to where they are because of money," he said.

A total of 240 BN elected representatives are in Kuala Selangor until Friday as part of BN's plans to wrest power from Pakatan Rakyat in Selangor.

Earlier, BN State Assembly Backbenchers Club president Nadzri Ismail said the representatives would stay with 300 families during the three-day retreat in an effort to "put the people first" and "be close to the rakyat".

Lauding this effort, Mahathir said, however, that sincerity might be lacking if the elected representatives went into the kampung in their luxury cars.

"For example, there was a BN candidate who went to a kampung in his Mercedes Benz to look for the constituency that he was selected to contest in. He didn't win," he said in driving this point across.

### **More parachute candidates needed**

Separately, in answering a question from former Perlis Menteri Besar Shahidan Kassim, the elder statesperson said the present situation called for more BN "parachute candidates", although the approach must not be used on a wide scale.

"Parachute candidates are needed to introduce changes to the party, like (former Finance Minister) Daim (Zainuddin), who was not too keen about politics but needed to get into the Dewan Rakyat.

"So we asked the person in Merbok to step aside for (Daim), who wasn't even from Merbok, but whose abilities were much needed.

"There is a need for more parachute candidates now, so people with abilities can be in government and

the cabinet, since there always are complaints that ministers don't know much," Mahathir said.

He also reiterated his often made call for BN leaders to stop sabotaging one another during elections, simply because personal ambitions could not always be met.

"(Prime Minister) Najib (Abdul Razak) said he will choose winnable candidates, but we may feel the candidate he chooses is 'unwinnable' because we are the only ones who are winnable. So we make sure that candidate does not win, to prove that the leadership is wrong," he said.

He then called on all the elected representatives to be prepared if they are not selected this time around, even though most elected representatives "don't want to quit (because) the pension is lower than the allowance".

"Most think they're the most winnable candidates. This mindset needs to change from the start. Your responsibility is to be prepared not to be selected as a candidate," Mahathir added.

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