

Dr M mocks PAS' 'rent-a-crowd' gimmick

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By S Pathmawathy

The huge show of force by PAS in Kedah on Saturday will not translate into votes, said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, stressing that participants were paid to attend.

"I used to get less than a hundred to attend my talks but I managed to win elections," he said mockingly, during a press conference at Cyberjaya, Selangor today.

Mahathir, who was once a major force in Kedah Umno, also dubbed the rally as a "mass gathering on hire".

"Well if you pay people to come they will come, it's a mass gathering on hire... we will see during the election if that 50,000 (people) translates into support and sends them to Putrajaya," he said.

Organisers of the Himpunan hijau ke Putrajaya (Green rally to Putrajaya) claim that 100,000 people attended the rally, which was held two weeks after a similar gathering by arch-rivals Umno at the National Stadium, Kuala Lumpur.

On the Bersih 3.0 rally, which organisers claim had attracted 250,000 people, Mahathir again displayed his acerbic wit by challenging the Coalition for Free and Fair Election (Bersih) to stand in elections.

"Bersih had a quarter of a million, much bigger (than before). So I think (Bersih co-chairperson) Ambiga (Sreenevasan) should form a political party," he said.

Mahathir had previously criticised the electoral reform rally as a prelude to "violent demonstrations" in the event the opposition fails to win in the next general election.

Dr M jokes at PM's rating

Meanwhile, quizzed on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's approval rating which had dipped slightly following the aftermath of the Bersih 3.0 rally, Mahathir again replied with sarcasm.

"Well if we remove him, who will we hire? We will get Anwar Ibrahim to lead BN. Okay? He has higher ratings so Anwar should lead BN. He is great."

According to independent research centre Merdeka Centre, Najib's overall ratings dropped from 69 percent in February to 65 percent in May 2012.

The dip was attributed to a shift in support from youths and non-Malays.

On a serious note, Mahathir said that regardless of the pollster's findings, he believes that Najib still commands the support from the majority.

"I think he (Najib) still has the majority. I think if it is goes below 30 or 40 percent then I think he should step down, then I might have a chance," said Mahathir, sparking laughter from the reporters.

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