

## **A slim BN win is an empty victory, says ex-PM**

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**By Koh Jun Lin**

It would be an empty victory if BN wins the next general election with a slimmer majority than the last one, because it would not be able to form a strong government, said former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"This is a question of the strong and the weak. When we are strong, people dare not challenge us. They know the majority are our supporters. If they challenge anyway, we'd show them," he said.

He said a weak government is fearful of losing support, especially in a democracy, and this is why it has given up on using force and draconian laws.

"Take the Internal Security Act (ISA) for example, what is there to be ashamed of ? When America and Britain were attacked by what they called terrorist, they arrested people and detained them without any laws, which is worst than us," he said, referring to Guantanamo Bay detainees.

In contrast, he pointed out that Malaysia had the ISA as a legal provision to give powers to detain people without trial. The law has been repealed in July 31 last year when the Security Measures (Special Offences) Act 2012 came into force.

Mahathir said this at a forum in Shah Alam today organised by publishing house Karangkrif.

'A leader must be bold'

He was responding to a member of the audience who suggested punitive action against those who ridicules almost every government policy, such as the Automated Enforcement System (AES) speed traps and the ban on the use of the word 'Allah' as the translation for 'God' in the Malay-language Bible.

Mahathir added that a developing nation such as Malaysia needed a capable and strong government that is not afraid of decisive action.

"But the leader must also be bold. If the leader is a coward, sorry lah," he said.

Mahathir opined that BN had been too easily swayed by popular opinion and adopted liberal policies in order to win praise.

In the process it opened itself to criticism and responded to that criticism by giving ground.

"Therefore, our supporters are disappointed and no longer support us in the 2008 general

election because they are not confident in the existing leadership.

“Unfortunately when they don’t support, they too become weak and what we see today is a weak government,” he said.

BN won 140 out of 222 parliamentary seats during the 2008 general election, which is the coalition’s worst showing since the 1969 general election.

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