

Send signal to the 'rotten' government
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The Ijok state seat by-election this Saturday is the right time for the voters to shatter the government's propaganda that all is well, said former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

While he did not outrightly called on the 12,000-odd Ijok voters not to back the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition, he nevertheless urged them to vote wisely this Saturday.

"If you don't think (about) what you are doing, you don't use your vote intelligently, then of course, you are to be blamed," he told malaysiakini yesterday.

"Unless you send a signal to the government that, 'Look, if you don't behave yourself, you may not get my vote at the next election,' then the government will say, 'You see? The people are voting for us. We are doing well,' he said.

He added that if the Ijok voters got swayed by the by-election goodies in the form of new development in the state constituency, they will only have themselves to blame if a 'rotten' government is voted in.

"If you vote (BN) because you get a lot of money or because you get a lot of projects, you may get a rotten government which uses money in order to buy your vote," said Mahathir.

He lamented that BN supporters would blindly vote for the ruling coalition.

"They don't care whether it is a good government or not. We are Barisan people. We vote Barisan. No assessment, no study. We vote (Barisan) because we must. That's why I say a country deserves the government it gets.

"If you don't think (about) what you are doing, you don't use your vote intelligently, then of course, you are to be blamed," he added.

If they lose, Khir Toyo will be blamed

He predicted that should the ruling coalition win, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would get all the credit.

"If they win, it's because of Pak Lah, if they lose, it's because of (Selangor Mentri Besar Mohd) Khir Toyo," he said with his trademark sarcasm.

While declining to describe that he was urging Ijok to register a 'protest vote', Mahathir said the BN should not be given unquestioned support.

"Don't vote BN blindly, don't vote PAS blindly, don't vote DAP blindly. Think. Use your faculties to think," he said.

The Ijok by-election has been called following the death of its incumbent K Sivalingam on April 4.

BN's MIC candidate K Parthiban will face off against opposition candidate Khalid Ibrahim of Parti Keadilan Rakyat in the by-election.

In the past week, the landscape of Ijok has changed with millions of ringgit being allocated for mosques, schools, newly surfaced roads, drainage, street lights and other facilities for the voters in this Malay-majority constituency 50km northwest of Kuala Lumpur.

Previously Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said that there was a 'feel good' atmosphere pervading the country, and that he was waiting for the 'feel good factor' to get even better before calling for general elections.

Mahathir has been involved in a running battle with his handpicked successor over the latter's alleged mismanagement of the country's economy, corruption and cronyism.

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