

Dr M to join tail-end of campaign

The Star - 17/1/2019 Pg. 6

Pakatan hopes PM's presence would shore up support from locals

By IVAN LOH
ivanloh@thestar.com.my

CAMERON HIGHLANDS: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to join Pakatan Harapan's by-election campaign trail here. However, he will only be there towards the end of the campaign.

A source said Dr Mahathir's schedule was still being finalised.

"Not within the next one week. Likely final days," said the source yesterday.

Pakatan is hoping that Dr Mahathir's presence can shore up support from the communities here, given his vast experience and popularity.

When contacted, Tanah Rata assemblyman Chiong Yoke Kong, however, said Dr Mahathir's influence on voters here has yet to be gauged.

"If you look at the GE14 polling statistics, you will find that PAS has gained more support in the Malay areas.

"Nevertheless, the *orang kampung* (villagers) certainly need Tun's commitment to resolve their problems, especially in Felda areas," said Chiong.

In the five-cornered contest for the Cameron Highlands parliamentary seat in GE14, Barisan Nasional's Datuk C. Sivarraajh won with 10,307 votes against Pakatan's M. Manogaran who got 9,710 votes.

The rest were PAS' Wan Mahadir Wan Mahmud (3,587), PSM's B. Suresh Kumar (680) and Mohd Tahir Kassim of Berjasa (81).

The Cameron Highlands by-election was called after the Election Court found evidence of corrupt acts committed by the Barisan camp during GE14.

The by-election on Jan 26 will be contested by Barisan's Ramli Mohd Nor, Manogaran and two independent candidates Wong Seng Yee and Sallehudin Ab Talib.

Commenting on Dr Mahathir's presence, MCA vice-president Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker said he believed it would have some impact on the campaign, based on his tenure as prime minister for 22 years.

"For the older generation, they can compare his policies and rule to the previous three prime ministers.

"For others, they will recall the Reformasi years and how Dr Mahathir's 22-year rule affected the country, economy and the people," he said.

"As I recall it, DAP, especially the present candidate, was very critical of him. But until today, there's no clarification by Lim Kit Siang or his party as to whether they have withdrawn their allegations of multiple mega scandals against Dr Mahathir, whether those accusations still remain or that they have made a U-turn," said Ti.

Meanwhile, former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is

expected to be at the highlands for three days, with programmes arranged with the people here.

He is expected to meet with people at Kampung Raja, followed by programmes at Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Ruil, Tanah Rata, Kuala Lipis and Sungai Koyan.

On Najib, Ti said support for Najib is slowly gaining traction and momentum among the people since they have now realised that the Pakatan government is not delivering on its promises.

"During this time of hardship, many are nostalgic about the better times under Najib's administration.

"Najib's administration was more people-friendly," he added.