

BN can't walk the talk, says Dr M

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PONTIAN: In yet another blazing salvo against Barisan Nasional and its new ally, Pas, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad labelled the opposition "hypocrites" in its latest run for the Tanjung Piai parliamentary seat.

The chairman of Pakatan Harapan, which is the main contender against BN to defend the seat it won with a wafer-thin margin in the last national polls, said the latter would do the necessary even if it had to be "insincere" with the voters.

He was referring to the Muafakat Nasional pact, where BN, along with its component parties, including MCA, and Pas signed a charter to mark its political cooperation as the opposition bloc.

Dr Mahathir said the narrative employed by BN was dependent on its candidates and constituency, as seen during the Cameron Highlands by-election and the run for Tanjung Piai.

"They are not sincere. Hypocrites. In front of (Malays in Cameron Highlands), they were supposed to be saviours of Malays.

"But when they are here, they are no longer Malays. That's because they think only about winning the election.

"They can't walk the talk," he told a press conference in Pekan Nanas here yesterday.

For the by-election tomorrow, PH is fielding Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's Tanjung Piai division chief Karmaine Sardini.

The by-election sees a six-cornered fight where the two main contenders are said to be Karmaine and Datuk Seri Dr Wee Jock Seng from BN.

Dr Mahathir expressed hope that Tanjung Piai voters support the ruling coalition and would not be swayed by vicious sentiments that paint the government in a bad light.

"Tanjung Piai voters are not stupid. They have gone through 14 by-elections and they know about deception and dishonesty.

"This time, we can see that BN is lying and Tanjung Piai voters must be mindful of this.

We should not be easily influenced."

The Tanjung Piai seat fell vacant after its incumbent, Datuk Dr Mohd Farid Mohd Rafik, a deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department, died on Sept 21 due to heart complications.

In the 14th General Election, Dr Farid of PH won the seat, polling 21,255 votes to defeat Wee, who received 20,731 votes and Pas candidate Nordin Othman, who garnered 2,962 votes.

Other contestants are Wendy Subramaniam of Gerakan, Datuk Dr Badhrulhisham Abdul Aziz of Berjasa and independent candidates Dr Ang Chuan Lock and Faridah Aryani Abd Ghani.

Earlier, on a separate matter, Dr Mahathir demanded that the United States' Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) explain the downgrading of Malaysia's air safety rating from Category 1 to Category 2 on Monday.

"If we are inefficient... we have proved that KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) is one of 20 largest airports in the world.

"We were given the responsibility to manage an airport in Turkey, and even invited to manage other airports," he said after breakfast with Tanjung Piai non-governmental organisations.

The downgrade followed an FAA review of the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia, which was carried out in April.

Under Malaysia's new Category 2 rating, the FAA will not allow reciprocal code-sharing arrangements between US carriers and Malaysian airlines, which will also face additional inspections at US airports.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian pilots, who have been employed by airlines in China, Indonesia and Arab countries, were "capable".

"If Malaysians work overseas, they aren't merely maids. They are architects, engineers and pilots.

"They are professionals, who receive the same pay as professionals from Europe."

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