

Isa: BN will retain Perlis in GE13
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By Lisa J. Ariffin

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 23 — Datuk Seri Mohamad Isa Sabu today talked up Barisan Nasional's (BN) chances of retaining Perlis in the coming polls, dismissing as "propaganda" rumours of the ruling pact's imminent fall in the state due to Umno infighting.

In a Bernama report today, the Perlis menteri besar expressed confidence that the ruling coalition will continue to garner support from all races in the upcoming election.

"After the 2008 General Election, BN had implemented various programmes to ensure the people continue to support BN," he was quoted as saying by Bernama online after launching the Perlis level Integrated 1 Malaysia Sales and Price Reduction Campaign at Dataran C-Mart, Arau today.

Mohamad Isa (picture), who is also BN Perlis chairman, said the various multi-racial communities in Perlis have always shown their support for the ruling party and would "certainly not take any risks".

He added he was confident that Sanglang and Simpang Empat, the two seats won by opposition PAS during the 2008 general election, would be returned to BN together with the 13 state assembly seats currently held.

Last week, PAS had expressed confidence in wresting Perlis from BN in the coming polls following claims of a major faction war in the state chapter of ruling party Umno.

In an interview with Harakah Daily, Perlis PAS commissioner Hashim Jasin said the state's former menteri besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim had recently admitted to him that Perlis Umno was now in shambles and split into four factions.

"There are four groups, and according to Shahidan, one is led by him, another by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Isa Sabu, another by Pauh assemblyman (Raja of Perlis' brother Datuk Seri Syed Razlan Putra Jamalullail) and one by former minister Datuk Azmi Khalid," he was quoted as saying by the PAS organ.

Hashim recalled that in the last Perlis state assembly sitting, Shahidan had openly rebuked Mohamad Isa and the latter's state executive councillors.

"I cut in, saying that it looks like Umno is split in two.

"He (Shahidan) replied, no, not two... three.

"Recently, I asked again... how did it become three? He (Shahidan) said no, it is four (factions)," Hashim told Harakah Daily.

The three-term assemblyman also spoke of "phenomenal" changes in the state's Chinese support towards BN, expressing confidence that at least 70 or 80 per cent of the community's votes would go to Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the coming 13th general election.

In Election 2008, Hashim noted that he had merely garnered 30 of the 800 votes up for grabs from the Chinese community in his Sanglang state seat.

But the tables have turned this time, the PAS leader said, claiming that by the next polls, it would be BN that would get the 30 votes while PR would make a clean sweep of the rest.

He said Perlis PR is well-prepared to face the election, which is now speculated to likely be in November, saying the pact's three parties have even agreed on a "shadow Cabinet" for the state administration, in the event of a takeover.

Hashim told the PAS newspaper that PR's three parties of PAS, PKR and DAP were very united in Perlis, pointing out that the parties had already settled their discussions on seat distribution last year.

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