

Dr M: Don't play favourites
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By Rozanna Latiff

BE RATIONAL: BN successes depend on members giving unconditional support to candidates in the general election

SOLO (Indonesia): UMNO and Barisan Nasional members have been advised to be sensible when giving their support to candidates in the upcoming general election.

Former Umno president and prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it did not matter who the candidate was as the ultimate goal was to establish a BN government.

"Even if they are 'parachute candidates' campaigning under the BN banner, they should be supported, because the point is to ensure that the coalition wins.

"Umno, MCA or MIC must remember that their election successes are dependent on the votes of non-party members as well. So, they have no reason to object to a qualified candidate just because the person is not party member.

"Members have to be rational. If they want to play favourites and sabotage candidates, then there is always a chance BN could lose," he said on Monday night.

He said the only question was whether the winning party would be able to secure a large enough majority to ensure a strong and stable government.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said the "Janji Bersih" participants, who marred the Merdeka Day celebrations by stomping on pictures of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and waving flags other than Jalur Gemilang, were mainly made up of those born after Merdeka who could not understand what life was like under colonialism.

"They do not understand the true meaning of freedom. They do not show their loyalty to the country as a free state.

"They do not appreciate or respect the national symbols -- the flag, the national anthem and so on. If we do not respect our own national symbols, if we can scribble and change the elements on our own flag, then what's to stop others from doing the same?"

On whether such actions could lead to a repeat of the May 13, 1969, riots, Dr Mahathir said some quarters relied on inciting hatred towards certain individuals, which had little to do with current political issues or policies.

"This hatred spreads. Najib may not be upset or angry (at those who stepped on his image), but his supporters are, and now they, too, will want to show their anger, which then leads to more unrest.

"When you're angry and full of hatred, you forget about your people, your religion and country."

Dr Mahathir was on a two-day trip to Indonesia, where he received a honorary doctorate from Universitas Sebelas Maret.

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