

Dr M Predicts Good Showing By BN In 13th General Election

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ALOR SETAR, March 29 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional (BN) would do well in the 13th General Election despite the coalition being seen as not as strong as it should be.

The BN was recovering from the political "tsunami" of the 2008 General Election, he said, and added that it was not easy to make a comeback after losing many seats and states in the last general election.

"For the first time, the BN is not seen as strong as it should be. The BN will still do well (in the 13th General Election) but the question is how many seats it will win," he told reporters after the "Majlis Sepetang Bersama Tun Dr Mahathir" (An Evening with Tun Dr Mahathir) at the convocation hall of the Al-Bukhary International University, here today.

He said the 13th General Election was a very important election because the opposition was making strong efforts to unseat the BN government.

"The opposition have come together so that they can challenge the BN ... but they come together not as a coalition, it's just "pakatan" (pact). They don't even have one single symbol nor do they have a proper agenda. I think the people will be able to make a good choice," he said.

Earlier, in his talk, Dr Mahathir said the people should count their blessings and not fall prey to the intimidation of certain quarters to change the current government in the next general election.

He said the people should not want to change a government when they were receiving various benefits.

"We like to find fault. Some people do not appreciate what they receive. They allege that the government is cruel, that it oppresses the people and does not provide freedom, when we receive all kinds of benefits.

"They have no valid reason to change the government. They seek to do so just because of hatred. One must ponder carefully, give preference to those who serve, not those who cannot be accepted at all," he said.

Referring to Kedah, he said the present PAS-led administration was inefficient.

"Much of the development has been undertaken by the federal government. One has to decide who can (bring development) and who cannot. There must be a credible government, otherwise we will suffer. Do not vote with anger," he said.

At the news conference, Dr Mahathir was asked about the intention of the Philippine government to revive its claim to Sabah.

He said it was the right of the Philippines to do so but taking up the matter with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) required the agreement of both parties.

"They can bring it to the court only if we agree to do so. They can appeal to the United Nations but whether the UN wants to support it is another matter altogether.

"There is also no law to coerce us to abide by any decision of the UN which favours the Philippines if the appeal comes from only one party," he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir expressed his thanks to the federal government for having approved a large allocation for the redevelopment of the Pekan Rabu in Alor Setar, an iconic location for Kedah and this city.

"I was a Pekan Rabu man before. I used to sell 'pisang goreng' (banana fritters) in Pekan Rabu. It's a good decision to improve Pekan Rabu. But once you have a facelift, you must maintain it," he said.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced yesterday that the federal government would redevelop Pekan Rabu at a cost of RM55.58 million.

He said the project, which came under the purview of his ministry, would involve the demolition of the old building and the construction of a new seven-storey structure.

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