

Dr M: Race confrontation if Kit Siang wins Gelang Patah
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, April 11 – A Lim Kit Siang win in Gelang Patah will result in racial confrontation, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today, arguing that Chinese-Malay economic partnership will be ruined.

With weeks left to Election 2013, the former prime minister continued his doomsday prediction by hammering on the opposition leader with his warning that Lim's victory in the southern state would trigger racial clashes that would replace the existing cooperation between the Malay majority and Chinese community.

"Kit Siang is going to bring about conflict and antagonism between the races, to wage the Chinese to dislike and hate the Malays," Dr Mahathir wrote in his chedet.cc blog.

The 87-year-old Dr Mahathir has become a de facto campaigner-in-chief for the Barisan Nasional (BN), going on the stump with the vigour of a much younger man as the 13-party coalition faces what is seen as its stiffest challenge ever from the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) pact.

The Johor-born Lim has been bearing the brunt of Dr Mahathir's attacks ever since announcing his plan to battle BN on its home turf – the birthplace of its anchor party Umno and the last standing home of Chinese partner, MCA.

Dr Mahathir (picture) has been relentless in chipping away at the predominantly Chinese DAP's credentials to share power with its political allies, whether the Islamist PAS or the urban-based PKR led by his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He pounded on the DAP's "Malaysian Malaysia" slogan purportedly championing raceless meritocracy, saying it was inherited from the Singapore-based PAP – which is now the republic's ruling party – and a stealth tactic to weaken the Malay influence.

"When Kit Siang decided to contest in Chinese majority Gelang Patah it is because he wanted the Chinese there and in Johor to reject working together and sharing with the Malays.

"An unhealthy racial confrontation would replace Sino-Malay cooperation which has made Malaysia stable and prosperous."

He added, "That cooperation will end when Kit Siang wins Gelang Patah."

The fourth prime minister, who had been Lim's main adversary in Parliament during his 22 years in office, said that even if violent clashes did not happen, a "confrontation between the three major races" would prove disruptive to the country's development.

"For this reason the decision of Kit Siang to contest in Gelang Patah will be the focus of the 13th General Election in this country.

"Will the DAP end Malay-Chinese friendship and cooperation in Johor or will "kongsi" remain the bases of race relations in Johor and in Malaysia?" he asked.

Malays make up about 60 per cent of Malaysia's 28 million population, while the minority Chinese make up slightly more than a quarter and are seen as an influential vote group.

Lim, who is leading the DAP's charge in Johor, is banking on launching a political tsunami from the south, targeting at least one-third of the 83 parliamentary seats for PR in BN fortresses in Johor, Sabah and Sarawak.

An incumbent in the Ipoh Timor seat in Perak, the 72-year-old was recently announced as the PR candidate in Johor's Gelang Patah, a strategic move by the opposition in its bid to wipe out as many MCA-held seats as possible in the southern state.

PR is said to be on its best election footing yet to end BN's half-century rule in Malaysia, having grown greatly in strength and in numbers since its harried formation after Election 2008.

A total of 222 parliamentary and 505 state seats are up for grabs.

Some 13.3 million voters, including 5,200 abroad, are eligible to cast their ballots in Election 2013 to elect lawmakers in 222 federal and 505 state seats in 12 states. Sarawak already held its state elections in 2011.

The Election Commission announced yesterday that the 13th general election will be held on May 5, and nomination day falls on April 20, which will signal the start of formal electoral campaigns that will last 15 days.

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