

Dr M comes to Johor BN's defence, tells voters to end Kit Siang's political career

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JOHOR BARU, April 1 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Johor folk last night to end Lim Kit Siang's political career in Gelang Patah in Election 2013 as Barisan Nasional (BN) brought out the veteran leader to defend its political fortress from an opposition onslaught.

In his usually truculent self, the country's longest-serving prime minister also took swipes at other opposition leaders such as Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat, saying the 13th general election was the occasion to end Kelantan menteri besar's political career

"Now Lim Kit Siang wants to come to Johor as it's easy for him to win anytime he wants. Johoreans must crush him to the end... to ensure it is his last day in politics," Dr Mahathir told thousands at a people's housing project launch organised by Pulai Umno outside Hospital Permai near here.

His highly-publicised appearance here came amid almost nightly ceramahs by Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders who are confident of winning several federal and state seats in Umno's birthplace.

The former Umno president and BN chairman reserved a major part of his speech on Lim, his political arch-rival from the time he was prime minister in 1982 until retiring in 2003.

"If he wants to contest in Penang, Malacca, we can understand but want to attack Umno's fortress in Johor is stupid, doesn't make sense," Dr Mahathir said of Lim, the veteran DAP leader who counts Johor as his birthplace.

He said DAP leaders should think of retiring after being in politics for a long time as the party had always talked about change.

"He has been around for a long time, wants to bring change but he should change himself. He has been a leader since I was an MP. BN has changed a few times but he hasn't moved.

"What change is that?" Dr Mahathir asked at the event held by Pulai Umno chief Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed. Others present included Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and Kota Tinggi MP Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar.

The former prime minister also charged after Anwar, who was his former deputy in Umno and the government until sacked in 1998 on sodomy and corruption charges. Anwar was later acquitted after Dr Mahathir retired.

He told the crowd that the opposition leader would "sell" Malaysia after capturing Putrajaya in the general election.

"Nauzubillah (God forbid), if he becomes PM, he will sell our country. This is the man who apparently agreed that Israel has a right to self defence," he said, referring to an interview of Anwar in the Wall Street Journal newspaper.

"Want to change the government, or choose a government is not hard. We are a democratic

country. But we must be smart in voting, don't choose mad people to be PM.

"YouTube video... I haven't watched but people talk. People like that if become the PM, even the office boy he will take, die lah," Dr Mahathir said in an oblique reference to Anwar's second sodomy charge which he was also acquitted of last year.

"But I know Johoreans will not give a chance. He knows he will lose and now he is planning chaos if he loses. If he loses, it's dirty but if wins, it is clean," he added.

He also said that electoral reform movement Bersih's three rallies were the opposition's proof that elections are not fair and required foreign observers in Election 2013.

"They can win if people like but if people don't like them it isn't the government's fault," said the veteran leader.

The former prime minister has been actively campaigning for BN ahead of the general election, a turn from Election 2008 where he left Umno to protest his successor Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership.

The sour ties between both leaders affected BN, which lost its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority and four states in the 2008 general election.

But the octogenarian is now backing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's efforts to regain the parliamentary super-majority and states lost in 2008.

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