

## **Dr Mahathir to campaign for PH in PD by-election**

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**05/10/2018**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be campaigning for Pakatan Harapan (PH) in Port Dickson on Monday, although he had previously stated that he does not usually go down campaigning in by-elections.

Dr Mahathir, who is also PH chairman, said he and other component party leaders would attend a massive campaign on Monday ahead of the by-election.

He said that he needed to be in Port Dickson to answer the allegations thrown at him.

"I think there are a lot of people making all kind of remarks against me, so I'll go there (Port Dickson)," he said referring to claims that he was not supporting Anwar.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the PH Presidential Council meeting here today.

Anwar, who is also PKR president-elect, is facing six challengers in the by-election, polling of which is on Oct 13.

The incumbent Datuk Danyal Balagopal Abdullah, from PKR, had vacated the seat on Sept 12 to pave the way for Anwar to make a comeback to Parliament.

Asked on the campaign situation in PD so far, Dr Mahathir said it was gaining momentum but yet to reach a climax.

"Because people are tired (election fatigue), this is a small election so like the last by-elections, the number of voters turning out is likely to be very small," he said.

Dr Mahathir also urged PD voters living outstation to return to vote.

On claims by electoral reform group Bersih that official government vehicles were being used in campaigning, the prime minister said they were used by ministers who were also party members.

"Even though we are ministers we are also party members. So, party work also has to be done but there is no payment for that. Comes out of your own pocket," he said.

On Anwar's appearance at a medal presentation ceremony for military veterans at a camp in Port Dickson during this campaigning period, Dr Mahathir said: "It wasn't a government function. It was veterans. These people already retired. It is not a function carried out by the Defence Ministry but the minister (Mohamad Sabu) was there as a party member," he explained.

As for PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang saying that he should be given the opportunity to serve out his full term as prime minister, Dr Mahathir replied: "That is his opinion, everybody can have their own opinion. This is a free country."

Abdul Hadi was referring to the consensus in Pakatan Harapan that Dr Mahathir will hand over the reins to Anwar mid-term.

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