

## **People should be ashamed to continue supporting UMNO - Dr Mahathir**

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KUALA LIPIS, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the people should feel ashamed to continue supporting UMNO and Barisan Nasional (BN) because their past leader was a kleptocrat.

The Pakatan Harapan chairman said not only both (UMNO and BN) were rejected by the people in the 14th general election (GE14) last year, UMNO president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak who is facing numerous charges for abuse of power was also rejected by his own party members.

"In GE14, BN for the first time was rejected because its leader was a thief, the whole world knows and called him a kleptocrat, that is the name given to Najib.

"Aren't we ashamed (to support Najib again). That is why the people kicked Najib out, to prevent him from continuing as prime minister and UMNO also threw him out (from continuing as president of the party)," he told thousands of people who will be voting in tomorrow's Cameron Highlands by-election at a gathering in Sungai Koyan near here.

Also present were DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, Amanah president Mohamad Sabu and PH's candidate for the by-election, M. Manogaran.

Dr Mahathir, who is also a former president of UMNO, and 22 years at that, held the view that the oldest party in the country along with its components in BN did not have much of a future in the new political landscape in the country.

In fact, he said, many UMNO members wanted to join Bersatu and PH, including the president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamid himself and UMNO deputy president Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, who is currently discharging the duties of the president.

He said they had come to see him to voice their intention to join Bersatu, of which Dr Mahathir is also chairman.



Thus, he said there was really no need for BN to field a candidate for the (Cameron Highlands) by-election.

"No need to contest again, UMNO people themselves are rejecting UMNO, many are asking to join Bersatu and Pakatan Harapan, because they no longer have faith in UMNO, so what for pick UMNO people, UMNO is gone, what is left is a party of thieves.

"So what for choose another candidate (BN's Ramli Mohd Nor), what can he do He may be an Orang Asli, we also serve the Orang Asli, but this is to deceive the Orang Asli, by taking an Orang Asli to be candidate," he said.

Dr Mahathir later performed the Friday prayers at the Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah's mosque here.

When asked by reporters afterwards about Najib's title as 'King of Troll', Dr Mahathir said the former prime minister was just looking for sympathy and support from the people after facing various criminal charges in court.

He said the action of the Pekan MP was part of his efforts to create the perception amongst the public that he was the victim.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated that Manogaran was the ideal candidate to represent PH and the decision to field him received full support from all parties under PH and the issue Manogaran being unsuitable candidate did not arise.

"He is an ideal candidate, Insya-Allah (God willing), he is not alone as we are all behind him.

"Sometimes, in other places the Indians have to support the Malays, while here its the Malays' turn to support an Indian. But if we don't support him, in other places (later) they won't support us, then we will loose," he said.

"I want to appeal to both, the red shirts (PH members) and others, regardless of whether they are Malays, Orang Asli, Indians or Chinese, don't vote for BN or UMNO candidates, vote for PH ... to show that our fate is in our hands, if we cast our ballots wrongly we will become the victims, so vote for PH for security," he said.

The Cameron Highlands parliamentary by-election tomorrow will witness a four-cornered fight between Manogaran, BN's Ramli Mohd Nor and two independent candidates, namely,

Sallehudin Ab Talib and Wong Seng Yee.

It is being held following the Election Court's nullification of the victory of Datuk C. Sivarraajh of BN in the 14th general election due to vote-buying.

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