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ALOR SETAR, AUG 17 (BERNAMA) -- PAS' FAILURE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION WAS CAUSED BY ITS OWN MISTAKE OF ASPIRING TO BECOME THE RULING PARTY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID IF PAS HAD AIMED AT BECOMING A STRONG OPPOSITION, IT WOULD HAVE HAD A BETTER CHANCE OF CAPTURING MORE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT INSTEAD OF BEING BEATEN BY THE GOVERNMENT.

HE TOLD BERNAMA AT THE KEPALA BATAS AIRPORT HERE BEFORE RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR THAT THE PEOPLE HAD BECOME CONFUSED AND DOUBTING THE GOVERNMENT'S LEADERSHIP.

HE SAID THE PEOPLE DECIDED TO GIVE BARISAN NASIONAL A BIGGER MANDATE, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR AND HIS WIFE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HAJAH MAHALIA WERE HERE FOR TWO DAYS TO CELEBRATE HARI RAYA HAJI.

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THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ALSO BN CHAIRMAN, SAID THE DAP ON THE OTHER HAND SUCCEEDED IN INCREASING ITS REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND STATE ASSEMBLIES ON ITS THEME AS THE OPPOSITION.

ASKED WHETHER THE OPPOSITION COULD PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE COUNTRY, HE SAID IT COULD ALTHOUGH HE ADDED THAT THE DAP HAD BEEN OPPOSING ALL GOVERNMENT POLICIES DESPITE THEIR OBVIOUS BENEFITS.

“THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OPPOSITION IN THIS COUNTRY AND THOSE IN OTHER NATIONS,” HE ADDED.

IN COUNTRIES PRACTISING DEMOCRACY, HE SAID, THE OPPOSITION PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE, UNLIKE IN MALAYSIA WHERE THE OPPOSITION OPPOSED EVERYTHING PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS UP TO THE DAP, WHICH WON 24 PARLIAMENTARY SEATS, TO DETERMINE HOW IT WOULD PLAY ITS ROLE AS A CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION. -- BERNAMA

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