

Mahathir: Pantai Merdeka victory will be repeated

3-party pact

failed to

attract votes

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The outcome of the Pantai Merdeka State by-election is proof that the co-operation between Pas, Semangat 46 and the DAP, and their use of "dirty tactics", had no major impact on the voters, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Happy with the result of the by-election, in which the Barisan Nasional candidate Senator Haji Shuib Lazim defeated Pas candidate Datuk Haji Mohamed Muslim Othman by 3,409 votes, the Prime Minister said Pas managed to obtain only 683 additional votes for its efforts.

In the 1986 general election, Pas candidate Haji Shuib Taib polled 6,292 votes while in yesterday's by-election its candidate, Datuk Haji Mohamed Muslim, garnered 6,975 votes.

"It shows that despite the help of the DAP, Semangat 46 and certain other groups, Pas only managed to poll 683 additional votes ... it appears that they have made no major impact.

"The voters also appear to have rejected the numerous allegations against the Government

and the use of dirty tactics," the Prime Minister said when speaking to newsmen on his arrival at the TUDM base after a two-day official visit to Pattaya, Thailand.

He thanked the voters and Barisan Nasional workers for the victory.

On the threat by Pas and Semangat 46 to contest the outcome of the by-election in court, Dr Mahathir said they were free to do so as always.

"It is up to the court to decide. If it declares the by-election null and void, we will accept it. But the reality is that we won the by-election."

To another question, Dr Mahathir said he felt that the Bari-

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san Nasional victory in Pantai Merdeka would be repeated in the general election.

However, he explained that in a by-election not many Barisan Nasional supporters came out to vote because they believed that the party would win with a convincing majority.

"However, in a general election, the party's supporters come out in full force and the party will receive more votes."

On whether the Barisan Nasional victory in the Pantai Merdeka by-election was an indication that the general election would be held soon, Dr Mahathir

said everything was an indication and quipped that October 1991 was not that far away.

Asked to comment on the allegation made in the latest issue of the *Rocket*, the DAP's newsletter, headlined *Dr M set to cheat in the general election*, Dr Mahathir said it did not surprise him at all because anybody who knows that he would lose would make such allegations to justify his inability to win.

He said if the Government was out to cheat, opposition parties would not win any seat and pointed out that in the 1986 general election the opposition parties had in fact increased their number of seats.

Asked whether he would sue the *Rocket* because the article was obviously libellous, Dr Mahathir said if the matter was brought to court the Opposition would create other stories in court because, like Parliament, there are privileges in court.

"It is not that we do not trust the courts ... if we win they will allege that we control the courts and if we lose, they will be happy ... either way they will capitalise on it," he said.

He said the Opposition had been hurling various allegations against the Government but he was confident that the people would not accept such dirty tactics.

"If we want to expose something, we must expose the truth and not make baseless allegations without proof."