

'People prevented or delayed from PM: Opposition cost Barisan

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Certain tactics used by political parties to delay or prevent Barisan Nasional supporters from casting their votes in the general election cost the coalition "one or two seats", Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Umno president and chairman of the Barisan Nasional said these tactics were used by officials and supporters of certain parties in Kelantan, Terengganu, Perak and Pahang.

Dr Mahathir, however, made it clear that the Election Commission was not responsible for these "malpractices".

He, in fact, recorded his appreciation and gratitude to the Election Commission for successfully managing the election efficiently but said there were some feelings of dissatisfaction among many party candidates and officials over incidents which had hindered supporters from going out to vote.

The incidents occurred possibly because the commission had to appoint officials from district offices who had clearly shown support for certain parties, and had deliberately prevented BN supporters from voting.

Speaking at a Press conference after chairing a three-hour Umno supreme council meeting, Dr Mahathir also said the council was informed of an incident in Terengganu where more than 1,000 people surrounded the home of a BN candidate to prevent him and his supporters from leaving to cast their votes.

Even the police, he added, could not get them out.

Dr Mahathir said there were cases where voters, including well-known personalities in the party, could not vote because they were told that their names were not in the voters' list, and were directed to other places.

He said they finally decided to check their names against the list in the station they had originally reported and found that their names were in the list.

Dr Mahathir said there were cases of deliberate attempts to keep voters waiting until they gave up and left without casting their votes. In some places, voters were kept waiting until 6pm.

There were cases, he added, where the voters' lists at the polling stations were not the official lists as some names were found missing.

The Prime Minister said the council was also informed of incidents where the names of Orang Asli were missing from the list.

After investigations, it was found that the list had been left behind, he added.

He said the use of money was also detected. Voters, he added, were reported to have been given money just before they went inside the centres to cast their votes.

Dr Mahathir said Umno would investigate the complaints. A report would be prepared and submitted to the Election Commission.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to voters who supported the BN and enabled the coalition to obtain a two-thirds majority in the Dewan Rakyat and in most State assemblies.

He also thanked the police and members of the security forces in ensuring that the election was carried out properly.

He said the principles of Press freedom had been demonstrated in the coverage of news of the opposition parties.

Some seats

tactics

casting votes'