

PM: No posts for candidates who won on Umno votes

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Barisan Nasional candidates who won solely because of Umno support in the recent general election may not be given positions in the government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We have no intention of appointing leaders who won only on Umno votes to government posts," the Prime Minister said.

In view of this, Dr Mahathir said, Umno was conducting a study to assess the performance of all Barisan component parties in the polls.

He said they should contribute towards the success of the

ruling coalition as they were part of the fold.

"We will share government positions with all Barisan component parties, but they must have played an important role in ensuring the victory of the ruling front," Dr Mahathir said when commenting on the two vacant posts of two deputy ministers reserved for the MIC. The issue was raised by several delegates at the Umno assembly this morning.

Speaking to reporters at the Putra World Trade Centre, Dr Mahathir said he had not made a decision whether to fill the deputy minister's posts in the Agriculture Ministry and Hu-

man Resources Ministry.

"This is why a study is being conducted and this time we will be able to carry out an accurate research," he said.

He said the government would be able to know whether the people in the respective constituencies supported the government or not because counting of votes was conducted at the voting centres.

"We are not greedy of taking over the places of others. This is not our intention," Dr Mahathir said, when asked whether Umno had plans to take over Malay majority areas.

On the debate on various issues at the Umno assembly, Dr

Mahathir said he was pleased with the high quality of the arguments by the delegates.

Dr Mahathir said he gathered that delegates wanted ministers to use their positions to strengthen the party further and not their own positions.

On a video clipping which was screened at the assembly, Dr Mahathir said it was highlighted to show how PAS campaigned in elections.

Citing one incident, he said an opposition party surrounded the house of a Barisan Nasional candidate and prevented 300 voters from casting their votes.

Dr Mahathir said their irre-

sponsible action resulted in the Barisan Nasional candidate losing the seat by a majority of 300 votes.

He said this was one of the incidents that came to the notice of the Commonwealth election observer team.

Dr Mahathir said the team felt that the main print media did not give enough news coverage for the opposition parties while the Chinese dailies supported the opposition and even campaigned for them.

He said an editor of a Chinese daily reported that they highlighted the views of the people but this was not the actual situation.

Dr Mahathir said newspapers were in a position to play up reports that could influence the people.

For example, he said, if the English and Malay dailies had given prominence to speeches on sensitive matters raised at the Umno assembly on their front page, it would have hurt the feelings of the Malays.

He added that this showed that the English and Malay newspapers were responsible in their reporting.

On the other hand, Dr Mahathir said, the Chinese newspapers played up racial issues by carrying them on the front page.