

Dr Mahathir: We accept the people's decision

KUCHING, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Barisan Nasional's loss in the Bagan by-election in Penang by a big majority could be because the people felt that the ruling coalition already had a large majority and a strong representation in Parliament.

The Prime Minister said the BN had earlier challenged the Bagan election result in court not because it wanted to win the seat but because, as a matter of principle, there should have been a recount if the difference of votes between two candidates was less than two per cent.

In the April general election P. Patto of the DAP won the seat after defeating Yeoh Khoo Chooi of the BN by 118 votes.

Dr Mahathir said the suit was filed because the returning officer had rejected the recount.

He said since the court had decided that in the Kuala Nerang State contest, there should be a recount which saw the BN's candidate's winning margin increasing from 11 to 17, the BN felt a recount was necessary for Bagan.

He said since the court decided that the by-election (after the death of Patto) would determine the MP for Bagan, the BN accepted the court's decision.

"We are disappointed over the two differing decisions by the courts although the cases are the same but since we respect the courts, we accept the decisions," he said.

Meanwhile, in Pasir Salak, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the BN accepted the verdict of the electorate.

He said even though BN was disappointed with the turnout, it respected the decision of the voters.