

06 SEP 1996

Sarawak-Anwar (Election Focus)

ANWAR'S VISIT TO REASSURE VOTERS OF FUTURE WITH BN

By: Amer Hamzah Md

KUCHING, Sept 6 (Bernama) -- In frenzied campaigning by the various opposition candidates to win over the voters in the Sarawak state election, several charges and promises have been heard.

Many have also used the big names in the top hierarchy of the central leadership, like "using" Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to garner support from the voters.

However, will the half-day whirlwind visit here by Anwar provide voters with the answers especially the "fence sitters?"

Within eight hours, Anwar has been in three places, to tackle the various opposition charges, and to ensure that the Barisan Nasional (BN) will retain its 100 per cent strength in the State Legislative Assembly as in the previous term, before its dissolution on Aug 15.

Voters in all the 43 constituencies being contested in the election will cast their votes tomorrow and on Sunday. A total of 19 seats are already in the hands of BN, having won them uncontested when nominations closed on Aug 27.

On his arrival at 2pm yesterday, Anwar was immediately whisked to Simunjan, about 180 kilometres from here, followed by visits to Kampung Stenggang, about 60 kilometres away while in the night he opened a new bridge in the town here.

The first issue emphasised by Anwar was that only the BN could bring development to the rakyat in the state.

Although the federal government is giving attention to projects worth billions of ringgit, small projects like those meant only for a particular local area would not be ignored, he said, adding that the huge projects would ensure continued economic expansion when the small local projects would provide amenities required by the rakyat.

Anwar however explained, he with his colleagues in the BN leadership would work with the teamwork spirit and assist one another, especially working on development projects for the areas represented by them.

In this respect, the Deputy Prime Minister has made it clear to voters in areas like Tasik Biru, that Dr Patau Rubis, a person still regarded as an old BN friend, is now no longer sharing the same struggles for the party's future on the state, or national front.

Anwar is prepared to make additional allocation for minor development projects like roads, electricity and water supply and other amenities initiated by the state.

Anwar urged the voters to reject the opposition promises that they could provide the experts for development when in fact this would be just impossible when the opposition themselves could never have the power to carry out their promises if returned in the election.

The opposition had, among others, pledged that they would build a special university for Sarawak as well as allotting the Bakun Hydro-electricity Project shares for the public.

Exhorting the rakyat to return the BN, Anwar said the party was practising the politics of reality, which takes into account the interests of the various races when distributing the national wealth.

According to him the BN-led government does not believe in racial politics that involve issues that could destroy the long-established unity of Malaysia's plural society.

Several political observers here believe that Anwar's visit here and

the clarifications he has made on the various issues exploited by the opposition was indeed timely.

His speeches have had their impact on voters' thinking and induced them to vote the BN tomorrow and the day after. --BERNAMA

AHM AR ABG