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Sarawak-Mohamed

BN LEADERS NOT BEHIND ANY INDEPENDENTS, SAYS MOHAMED

KUCHING, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim are not supporting any candidates challenging the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the Sept 7 and 8 Sarawak state election, BN secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said today.

Other BN leaders, whether at the federal or state level, also had nothing to do with the independent candidates, said Mohamed, who is Umno secretary-general and Information Minister.

"BN will not accept these challengers even if they win," he said in dismissing claims by some independents that they had the blessings of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to contest.

In their campaigning, these candidates said they would be admitted into BN if they won. Sixty independents are standing in 38 of the 43 seats that are seeing contests. BN won 19 seats unopposed on nomination day.

"I, on behalf of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister as well as Umno and other BN components, would like to categorically deny talk that they are supporting such candidates," he said.

Anwar is scheduled to join in the BN campaign on Thursday to defuse the claims of the opposition.

Mohamed said there was no reason for any BN leader to support the opposition because Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud had excellent ties with the federal leadership.

He said federal leaders had confidence in the Sarawak leadership and could see the development potential in Sarawak for it to contribute to the realisation of Vision 2020.

Asked on allegations that efforts were being made to bring Umno to Sarawak, Mohamed said: "Umno will not come to Sarawak now or in the future."

"There is no need for Umno to come to Sarawak. Sarawak does not face any problem and the relationship between Umno and PBB (Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu) is very close," he said.

Mohamed, who arrived here last night, said he was satisfied with the BN election machinery and also the cooperation among the BN components.

Mohamed urged voters to come out in full force to exercise their right to choose a government.

On the opposition candidates' contention that Sarawak needs an opposition voice, Mohamed said the important thing was for the state to have a strong government to ensure continuity in development.

"What is the use of having an opposition that is only good at making noise?" he said. -- BERNAMA

SJA AU YBY