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Sarawak-Mahathir

BN SUCCESS IN SARAWAK A GOOD SIGN, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the success of Sarawak Barisan Nasional (BN) in capturing 19 seats uncontested in the state election scheduled for Sept 7-8 was a good sign although it could not yet form the government.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said he was worried that a big victory by the BN on nomination day today might cause voters to stay away on polling day on the assumption the BN would be returned to power regardless of whether they voted or not.

"This matter is important. I am worried that after taking so many seats, there may be voters who think the BN has already won (the election) and they should give one or two seats to the opposition even though the opposition is useless.

"We are aware of this kind of thinking among voters. That is why it is a good thing that the BN did not win (a majority of seats on nomination day). It means the voters will turn out in big numbers to vote (on polling day)," he said to reporters at Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah International Airport in Subang on his return from a four-day working visit to China.

The Election Commission announced this afternoon that the BN has won 19 seats uncontested. The new State Assembly has 62 seats, six more than previously.

Asked on the factors which helped the BN to capture so many seats unopposed, Dr Mahathir said "there are no issues in Sarawak".

"Development in Sarawak under the BN government is very obvious and rapid," he said, adding that the Sarawak BN government has carried out its responsibilities with full sincerity.

"We can see the rapid development in Sarawak. Modern facilities have been provided even in the remote areas. Tourism is growing rapidly and sophisticated industries have now reached Sarawak," he said.

He said the BN government in Sarawak would not be complacent, however.

"We are aware of our responsibilities and we will not forget them if we are re-elected," he said. -- BERNAMA

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