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Mahathir-Sarawak

PM HAPPY WITH BN VICTORY IN SARAWAK BUT SAD OVER FRIEND'S DEFEAT

PETALING JAYA, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is happy with the Barisan Nasional's victory in the Sarawak state election but at the same time expressed regret that his friend, Tan Sri Dr Wong Soon Kai was defeated.

"He (Dr Wong) had served for quite some time and I wonder why he did not win," the Prime Minister said when asked to comment on the defeat of Wong, who is the Chairman of Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP), in Bukit Assek.

Dr Wong, who was also Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister, lost to the DAP's Wong Ho Leng by a majority of 226 votes.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after attending the wedding of the son of the Director General of the Institute of Islamic Understanding, Malaysia (IKIM), Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim at a hotel here, tonight.

Dr Mahathir likened Dr Wong's defeat to that of former Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu who lost to DAP secretary general Lim Kit Siang in Padang Kota in the 1990 general election.

"I don't know what was Tan Sri Wong's mistake or what the DAP can give that the voters rejected him ( Dr Wong)," he said.

The Prime Minister said a post-mortem would be carried out by Sarawak BN on Dr Wong's defeat as well as the two other DAP victories in Kidurong and Pelawan.

Overall, the BN won 57 seats, 19 of them uncontested, while independent candidates won two seats.

Dr Mahathir said Dr Wong's defeat could also be due to the reduced voter turnout.

He said the overall low turnout of 65.49 per cent in the state election was probably because the voters had already assumed that the BN would be returned to power.

However, the Prime Minister said, the DAP's victory in the three constituencies did not mean the party would establish a strong presence in the state.

On the loss of independent candidate Dr Patau Rubis who was previously touted as the BN's strongest opponent, Dr Mahathir said he had expected the defeat as, according to him, Dr Patau was a man who does not take a firm stand.

"Even when he was in the BN, he made speeches in the Dewan criticising the government. I don't know what his stand is, it's somewhat difficult to believe this sort of people. We don't know exactly what his stand is," he said.

However, the Prime Minister said he was happy the BN secured such a big majority. -- BERNAMA

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