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Don't disrupt racial harmony, Anwar warns the Opposition

NIBONG TEBAL, Thurs. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today warned Opposition parties against disrupting racial harmony when trying to garner support from the people.

Stressing that the DAP and an independent candidate contesting in the Sungai Bakap by-election had a silent pact to break the good relations among voters of different races, he urged the people to reject the Opposition.

"The DAP is going around saying that the Chief Minister, being a Chinese, is only concerned about the welfare of the Malays while the independent candidate claims the Malays need a Malay to represent them.

"This is very dangerous politics. They are being racist in their desperation to win the by-election," he said during a Pemimpin Bersama Rakyat gathering in Sungai Bakap, near here.

Also present at the gathering attended by about 1,000 people were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, MP for Nibong Tebal Dr Goh Cheng Teik, BN candidate for the by-election, Lai Chew Hock, and BN component party leaders.

Lai, a businessman, will face DAP candidate Goh Kheng Huat and an independent, Abu Harith Ahmad in the by-election. Polling is on Nov 8.

Another independent candidate, K. Ganesh, announced his withdrawal from the race yesterday as he was confident the BN State Government would resolve the problems faced by the Indian community in Sungai Bakap.

Anwar, who is also Umno deputy president, said Umno and BN regarded Abu Harith as a traitor.

"Yes, there are some problems affecting the Malays in Sungai Bakap, but other races in the area too have problems.

"We cannot just please one community and ignore the others. This is not the principle of BN.

"There is a pact between the DAP and Abu Harith and they are out to destroy the racial harmony enjoyed by the different communities in Sungai Bakap," he said.

He added the approach by the DAP and Abu Harith could disrupt the nation's political stability and socio-economic progress.

"Let me remind you that a vote for the independent candidate is a vote of betrayal to Umno and the Malays since he is trying to split the Malays to ensure victory for the DAP.

"His (Abu Harith) and the DAP's brand of politics do not benefit the Malays or any other community.

"What is wrong with having a non-Malay Chief Minister if he is capable of working for the development of all races?

"As such, I appeal to all of you to show the world that we are united and will always remain so," he said.

According to Anwar, Umno would never accept any independent candidate who had opposed the party or the BN.

"This morning, when chairing the party's disciplinary and management committee, I rejected the applications of several independents who had opposed Umno and the BN in the last general election.

"The same goes with Abu Harith although he had claimed that Umno would accept him if he wins the by-election."

Anwar said the world was focusing its attention on Malaysia to see if it could defend against the attacks on the country's economy.

"We have always enjoyed racial harmony and prosperity because we are politically stable and have always been united under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We must continue to rally behind Dr Mahathir and give our fullest commitment and support to help him tide over the present difficulties.

"We can do so by voting for Lai and ensure a major victory for the BN candidate who will represent all the communities," he said.

At another function in Tasek, Anwar said the BN Government was always sensitive to the needs of the people.

"When the people appealed for a reduction of the driving licence fees through their BN representatives, we listened to them and adhered to their request.

"We know what is best for the people, unlike the Opposition which are always making noise and misleading the people."

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