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Mahathir-Pledge

MAHATHIR: BN WILL FULFIL PLEDGE, INCLUDING ROTATION OF CM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional (BN) will fulfil all its pledges made during the election campaign including the continuation of the rotation system for the post of Sabah Chief Minister.

The prime minister said although BN was one seat short of the two-thirds majority in the State Legislative Assembly, what was significant was that the BN victory this time was not achieved through "party hopping" by the members of the Assembly as was the case in the past state elections.

"The BN victory was a very clear victory," he said in his telephone conversation at Sri Perdana with Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in Kota Kinabalu which was telecast live by RTM last night.

Dr Mahathir also spoke with Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob, in his capacity as Sabah BN elections director, and Datuk Osu Sukam, state Umno chairman who won in the Kawang state constituency.

"We give our pledge that whatever promises we made will be fulfilled," he said, reminding the BN candidates who won in the election to be more determined in their struggles and to fulfil the promises.

On the defeat of Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, the prime minister said it was deeply regretted although he had tried his best to help the former as he wanted Dompok to continue as Chief Minister.

"We want Tan Sri Bernard to continue as chief minister but it appears as though the people of Penampang do not want him to become chief minister," he said. Dompok lost in the state constituency of Moyog (in the Penampang parliamentary constituency) to PBS candidate Datuk Clarence Bongkos Malakun.

On the rotation of the chief minister's post, Dr Mahathir said the system would be continued but who would be the next chief minister to represent the Kadazandusun community following the defeat of Dompok would be decided later.

"I will discuss with Tan Sri Bernard and other leaders of the BN component parties so that a wise decision can be arrived at taking into account the effects on the choice of the voters in Sabah," he said.

"Who will lead the Sabah state government will be decided later. But the rotation system will be maintained."

Under the rotation system, Dompok would be chief minister for a two-year term before the post is taken over by a Muslim Bumiputera representative.

The prime minister said although the defeats suffered by Dompok, who is also PDS president, and Datuk Joseph Kurup (PBRs president) were much regretted, there were BN candidates from the Kadazandusun community who had succeeded.

He said this had given confidence to the BN that more Kadazandusuns had accepted the BN policies and there was better prospect for more BN candidates from the community in future elections.

Dr Mahathir hoped Dompok and Kurup would not be disheartened by their defeats and he urged them instead to continue with the struggle and serve in the interest of development for Sabah in particular and the country in general.

On the voting trend in Sabah, he said the sentiment of voting based on party symbols and individuals was still prevalent without giving any consideration to development.

Dr Mahathir said the sentiment which tied the voters to individuals or symbols which they supported resulted in the BN campaign on development to be ineffective.

The prime minister ended his conversation by congratulating the BN candidates who had won and also requested Abdullah to send his greetings to those BN candidates who lost.

"Although the victory did not achieve the two-thirds majority, it was still very appropriate, their efforts all this while had been fruitful," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AHH AO