

12/03/1999

## Mahathir confident of BNN victory in Sabah election

Lokman Mansor

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday he is confident that the Barisan Nasional (BN) will win the Sabah elections. "... not just by simple majority but a victory that will form a strong government for Sabah," he told reporters upon his return from the State at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport in Subang yesterday. The BN chairman was asked if he was more confident of a victory in Sabah after his visit.

A total of 726,690 eligible Sabahans will go to the polls today and tomorrow. There are 199 candidates vying for 48 seats, with 144 coming from the three main parties, BN, Parti Bersatu Sabah and Bersekutu. The election results will be known tomorrow.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir spent about 10 minutes to record a special message to Sabahans over radio and television.

Urging Sabahans to vote for the BN to ensure a brighter future for the State, he said, under the BN Government Malaysia has remained stable and in harmony which enabled elections to be carried out peacefully.

"Tomorrow you will begin voting and I hope you will all vote BN for a strong government to rule Sabah with success. The Federal Government will give its full cooperation to the BN Government in Sabah, so vote BN for the well-being of the Sabah people," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir began by congratulating the people of Sabah for their enthusiastic response to the campaigning and elections, which went well without any untoward incident.

"The people appear interested in the elections and could be seen attending talks and listening to speeches presented by the candidates taking part in the elections.

"This is something which is unique to Malaysia, where multi-racial and multi-religious people can leave together peacefully. This is one of the results of the Government led by Barisan Nasional," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when there is peace and harmony, the country is stable and conducting elections is not a problem as in some developing countries

"In some countries when there are elections there will be riots and killings. Here in Malaysia we have a society that enjoys peace and harmony. Any problem we face can be solved calmly," he added.

Dr Mahathir said in dealing with the economic crisis for example, the situation in Malaysia was calm and this enabled the Government to resolve the problems arising from pressure on the currency and stock market prices.

"We must appreciate this and maintain harmony and stability. The BN is a multi-racial coalition and the component parties cooperate with each other and also with the BN Government at the Federal and state levels.

"Of course it is easier for the BN Federal Government to cooperate with a state government of the same party. Therefore we hope the Sabah people will choose BN candidates in the elections so that Sabah can have a BN Government that can cooperate and benefit from the cooperation with the Federal Government."

Dr Mahathir said he believed Sabahans will choose BN candidates and said he was happy that while he was in Sabah many people attended BN gatherings and expressed their support.

"I urge the people in Sabah again to choose BN for a brighter future for Sabah," he said.

\* SEE ALSO p2

(END)