

# PM happy with win but saddened by rotten tactics

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**SEPANG, Sun:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was very happy with Barisan Nasional's (BN) win in Sanggah but saddened by the Opposition's underhand tactics.

The Opposition, he said, had used "very rotten tactics" such as trying to frighten people, especially the Chinese, and prevent them from casting their votes in the by-election.

"I'm very happy we got more votes than before (in the general election) despite about 900 voters being dropped this time, some of whom may be BN supporters.

"Nevertheless, we obtained a sizeable increase in the majority and I believe that it was the result of the campaign," he told reporters after launching the final round of the FIM World Motorcycle Grand Prix 2000 at the Sepang International Circuit here today.

Redzuan Harun defeated PAS's Datuk Hishamuddin Yahaya with a 1,963-vote majority in the by-election compared with 1,038 majority won by the BN in the general election.

Asked what he thought was the deciding factor for the victory, Mahathir said there was a realisation among the voters that BN was the best party which didn't abuse its position or use dirty tactics to gain support.

"This, I think is because the rakyat are no longer influenced by emotions sparked off by

other incidents such as feeling that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was humiliated," Mahathir said.

"Although we won the general election, there is evidence to show that support for the BN has waned, especially among the Malays due to distortions by the Opposition."

He said this time there was an opportunity to explain what really happened.

Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, was convinced that the explanation was what convinced the people to support the ruling party.

"The Opposition's campaign is based on the single theme of 'hate BN, vote for us' because when asked about the benefit of voting for it, the people say there is nothing.

"It (Opposition) only wants to provoke the feeling of hatred for the BN and get the votes for itself," he said.

On whether the victory will restore the relationship between the BN, Umno in particular, and the Malays, Mahathir said: "Yes, I think it will recover once we can get closer to them and explain the real thing.

"There is no conspiracy, there is no set-up.

"It's just that we want to save our country from someone we feel is not qualified."

Mahathir added that the good voter turnout was an indication of the people's wish to reclaim what was lost in the general election.