

02 JUL 2001
Mahathir-Likas
BN READY FOR LIKAS BY-ELECTION

PUTRAJAYA, July 2 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) is ready for the Likas state by-election in Sabah on July 21 although it has not decided on its candidate, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He confirmed that he had yet to receive any names of prospective candidates from the BN component parties.

"We have made preparations irrespective of who the candidate will be," he told reporters after chairing the first meeting of the Malaysian Aerospace Council at the Prime Minister's Department complex, here.

Asked about the possibility of former Likas state assemblyman Datuk Yong Teck Lee being re-nominated for the by-election, he said Yong was considered eligible to contest in view that the court decision did not say that he was guilty.

"In terms of the court decision, he still can (contest), whether it's wise or not (to nominate him), that's another matter," he said.

Yong's election as the Likas state assemblyman was declared null and void by the Election Court on June 8 after ruling that there were phantom voters in the March 13 1999 election.

The prime minister was also asked to comment on Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's meeting with the United States Congressmen recently to discuss Malaysia's internal affairs.

Dr Mahathir said: "That's her right but if we ask outside people to determine our domestic problem then we are gradually going to lose our independence".

Dr Wan Azizah met with US Congressmen including the chairman of the International Relations Committee, Henry Hyde, last Thursday to explain the condition of her husband, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is currently in jail, and also Anwar's stand to seek treatment for backache in Germany.

Dr Mahathir said it appeared to be an opposition trend to seek the views of foreign powers to resolve an internal issue because apart from Dr Wan Azizah, PAS President Datuk Fadzil Noor had also met Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in Sydney recently.

He said it was up to the people whether they still wanted to support parties that "called" foreigners to control their own country.

"In the past era, such people were called traitors to the nation but in this era, apparently, there are people who regard such acts (asking foreign powers to intervene) as noble acts," he said.

-- BERNAMA
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