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Mahathir-Sarawak

BN's VICTORY PROOF OF PEOPLE'S REJECTION OF GUTTER TACTICS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Barisan Nasional (BN)'s resounding victory in the Sarawak state election last night was proof of the people's rejection of rough and dirty tactics of peninsula-based opposition parties namely PAS and Keadilan.

The Prime Minister said this went to prove that such gutter tactics were not only unacceptable in Sarawak but also in the Peninsula.

" Using rough tactics is not in our culture and I hope others will also reject them," he said at a media conference after opening the 89th Federation Dentaire Internationale-World Dental Congress 2001 at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil here last night.

He said this time around the Sarawak BN performed even better than the last state election as the opposition only won a seat through the DAP in Kidurong while another seat, Meluan went to an independent.

PAS which contested three seats and Keadilan, 25, failed to win any seat in this state election, the eighth for Sarawak.

Dr Mahathir said that by rejecting PAS and Keadilan the electorate in Sarawak went to show that there was no place for intimidating and threatening tactics.

" This is not a democratic way. They (PAS and Keadilan) thought democracy gives them the freedom to make threats," he said.

He said Keadilan was obsessed with fielding a large number of candidates only to see that 11 of them losing their deposits.

On perceived disunity among Sarawak Malays and Melanaus, the prime minister said such notion obviously had no basis and no bearing on the outcome of the election going by the results this time around.

The fact remained that there is not much difference between the Melanaus and the Sarawak Malays culture-wise and that many of the Melanaus are Muslims, he said.

Dr Mahathir reminded the newly-elected BN assembly members to honour all pledges made to the electorate during campaigning and not betray the people's trust.

"Do not break promises..do not ever think now that we have won we can go and have a jolly good time and forget about the people...If they (assembly members) do this they are only putting themselves, the party and the government in peril," said Dr Mahathir.

He hoped that as individuals, the elected representatives would discharge their duties as pledged and as a group in the BN, they should ensure that "the government serves the people and develop Sarawak".

The prime minister also thanked the Sarawak BN leadership for the landslide victory which he said showed that the people accepted the BN government led by Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud despite the criticisms and allegations hurled against Abdul Taib.

"...but overall the people of Sarawak accept this government," Dr Mahathir said.

On Taib's statement that the BN's triumph in Sarawak proved that the people in the state still needed Dr Mahathir's leadership, the prime minister said perhaps in a way he could have an influence as BN chairman but not in his personal capacity.

" ...I did go around campaigning in the rural areas and meet the leaders there...perhaps that could have influenced some of the Sarawak people to support the Barisan Nasional," he added.

-- BERNAMA
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