

Dr M: Opposition always accuses BN of unfair tactics

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JOHOR BARU: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Opposition has the tendency of accusing Barisan Nasional of much wrongdoing during elections, especially if it loses the seat.

The Prime Minister and Umno president said it was nothing new for the coalition to be accused of doing such things even if Barisan members did not conduct any wrongdoing or use arm-twisting tactics to garner support or votes.

"That was what the Opposition did in the Lunas (by-election). We did not play dirty and neither did we act like gangsters to win (the Indera Kayangan) by-election.

"They are good at accusing us. If they do anything like this, they will definitely keep quiet," he said.

Dr Mahathir, speaking at a press conference after a briefing by Gerbang Perdana Sdn Bhd, the company responsible for the construction of the new bridge and Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex to replace the causeway yesterday.

He was commenting on news reports quoting Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor as saying that Barisan had won the Indera Kayangan by-election on Sunday through dirty tactics.

On the Opposition's claims that

the Government used the media to exploit certain issues to scare and influence the voters into voting for Barisan, he said it was the Opposition that exploited certain issues involving Islam and hurled abuses and curses on other people.

In Kuala Lumpur, Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said the opposition parties should stop harping on irrelevant issues such as alleged misuse of the media by the Barisan.

Khalil, who is Information Minister, said the KTM reports and programmes on the Taliban was a major international issue and these were reported by every news organisation.

"There's no motive for our reporting of the Taliban issue. The defeat of the Opposition in Indera Kayangan is a trend of the voters' waning interest in the Opposition.

"They had previously lost support among voters in Sarawak and Likas and their defeat in Indera Kayangan is expected," Khalil told a press conference after meeting the Communist Party of China vice-president of the central party school Li Junru.

Li is leading a seven-member delegation to Malaysia to study the workings of Umno's political activities.

Members of the Communist Party of China have been invited to Umno general assemblies since 1996.