

13/10/2002

Dr M: PBS backing a factor behind BN win

PUTRAJAYA, Sat. - Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the overwhelming support for Barisan Nasional in the Gaya by-election showed that Parti Bersatu Sabah supporters had backed the coalition.

Thanking PBS president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan, the Prime Minister said he knew it was tough, but PBS supporters had rallied behind BN.

"Even in the past, not all supported PBS because they opposed the government. Till now, there are some who continue to do so."

Dr Mahathir said this in a tele-conferencing from his official residence here with deputy BN chairman and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and other BN leaders who were in Kota Kinabalu.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad that despite the low turnout, BN obtained a very good majority which doubled the votes in 1999 election.

To Abdullah's statement that the election went on smoothly with only three minor incidents, Dr Mahathir replied: "This is because a certain political party did not contest. If they had contested, there might have been some incidents."

To this, Abdullah replied: "But that political party will not contest in Sabah. Sabah has proven to be a BN stronghold."

Abdullah said there were no major issues brought up by the opposition.

On the low voter turnout, Abdullah said it could be because some of the voters were working outside Sabah and did not return to cast their votes.

"There were also some who knew we would win, so they did not go out and vote."

Dr Mahathir said BN should try to determine why the turnout was low.