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Mahathir-Gaya/BM

MANY CONFIDENT THAT BN WILL WIN- DR MAHATHIR

DENGKIL, Selangor, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Many people were confident that the Barisan Nasional (BN) will win in the Gaya Parliamentary by-election and so many did not come out to vote, the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

"Many were so confident that the BN will win and so were not even in the area on polling day," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after witnessing the handing over of five electric trams to Paya Indah Wetlands by Tenaga Nasional Bhd on the occasion of the first anniversary of the opening of the wetlands.

Dr Mahathir said despite the smaller voter turnout, the BN candidate Liew Teck Chan won with a big majority.

The BN yesterday retained Gaya with an 11,923-vote majority compared to the 4,117-vote majority in the previous election in 1999.

About 45 per cent out of the 49,427 Gaya voters took part in the by-election.

Asked on the suggestion by former Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah that he reconsider his decision to step down as Prime Minister and contest in the next general election, Dr Mahathir said he would stick to his decision.

"I have decided and that's it. I cannot be wavering. Even if I continue I will have to end it also. I have been an elected representative for a very long time," he said.

Dr Mahathir said his struggle in the political arena would continue even though he would no longer be the MP for Kubang Pasu.

He said after stepping down as Prime Minister he would have more time to focus on the political field compared to at present.

"I am retiring from my post and not quitting politics and I will continue to campaign for the BN and Umno. I will have more spare time then compared to now when there is a lot of work," he added.

-- BERNAMA

FA RV AAM