Lahad Datu incursion is Sabah BN campaign fodder
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By Aidila Razak

SABAH The Lahad Datu incursion has been the prevailing theme in the BN drive for votes, especially during the two-day visit by the coalition's chief Najib Abdul Razak.

In just about every speech delivered in Kuala Penyu, Bongawan, Kota Kinabalu and Keningau yesterday and today, Najib and Sabah BN chief Musa Aman (left) have emphasised the federal action taken as proof of strong support for Sabah.

"The fallen security personnel, where were they from? From Pasir Mas (Kelantan), Besut (Terengganu) and Klang (Selangor)," Najib told a crowd of some 5,000 in Keningau today.

"They paid the ultimate price to ensure that Sabah is not tainted ... a vote for BN is a vote for the sovereignty and security of this beloved land."

Unlike the BN government, he said, Pakatan Rakyat has been batting for the other side by "meeting up with those who don't like Sabah to remain within Malaysia".

Asked by reporters later if the incident may have turned votes against the BN, he said: "If at all, it has strengthened BN, not that we wanted it to be that way. It .... happened because of our strong commitment to defend the security and sovereignty of Sabah."

He said that he and Sabah BN leaders have continuously touched on the issue not because the situation is "severe" but because it is "close to the hearts of Sabahans".

"It is not that Sabahans are in a state of anxiety. We just want to give reassurance that this will be handled sternly," he said.

He denied that he has been making use of the deaths of security personnel to campaign.

"We are giving a guarantee of security, and we can see that people are spontaneous in their applause whenever the issue is raised," he said.

The audience in Kuala Penyu yesterday and Keningau today did applaud louder

when Najib and other BN leaders lauded the security personnel over Lahad Datu.

Najib also attended a dinner by the Federation of Sabah Chinese Associations yesterday in Kota Kinabalu to commemorate the contributions of the security forces.

‘Pakatan stronger than before’

Most people met by Malaysiakini in Kota Kinabalu are reluctant to discuss the issue of Lahad Datu, although some have related it to the influx of foreign migrants into Sabah under BN's watch.

Others, including those who profess to support BN, also expressed doubts over claims that Pakatan Rakyat had a hand in the incursion.

Najib, who has been zipping around the west coast of Sabah via helicopter, also refuted claims by Pakatan that it had made inroads in Sabah.

"The two days I’ve been here, I haven’t see signs of strong movements against BN in Sabah. Quite the contrary, I find support for BN is very good...," he claimed.

He, however, conceded that Pakatan is "stronger than before" and that BN has to work hard and not take things for granted in the 13th general election.

Najib dismissed a question pertaining to compensation and aid for border scouts who had served in Pensiangan in 1964 during the Indonesian confrontation.

"On the matter of Sabah security, I was one of those who was sent to Pensiangan as a border scout and to this day my friends and I got nothing...," said a local reporter.

Interrupting the question, Najib said: "I cannot attend to personal questions."

"We had good security then...," the reporter continued only to be stopped by the caretaker prime minister's aide and bodyguards, who told him to step off the stage where the press conference was being conducted.

"If security was good then, great, thanks," Najib said.

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