

Mahathir on victory of Isa, 'not ISA'
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, whose sarcasm appears to grow with age, offered a three-paragraph response to Isa Samad's resounding victory in the Bagan Pinang by-election.

The 84-year-old statesman also made it clear that he was talking about Isa, and not ISA (the Internal Security Act).

Since the onset, Mahathir had been opposed to Isa's candidacy because the latter had been found guilty of money politics during the 2004 Umno polls and suspended.

However, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said the law even allowed criminals to contest after a stipulated period, and Isa had already paid his dues.

In his latest blog posting, Mahathir said he was glad that he was wrong in the choice of BN's candidate for Sunday's by-election.

"I believe BN would have won irregardless of who was fielded. But the victory obtained by Isa (not ISA) was simply astounding," added the former Umno president.

Isa, who was formerly the menteri besar of Negeri Sembilan for 22 years, trounced his PAS rival Zulkefry Mohamad Noor with a majority of more than 5,000 votes.

The by-election also witnessed a significant increase of support from non-Malay voters for the ruling coalition.

An in-depth study must be done

Numerous reasons have been cited for this landslide victory.

Some claimed that Isa's immense popularity in the state among all the races was the main factor while others felt that Najib's 1Malaysia concept had raked in the support.

MIC president S Samy Vellu argued that it was his party's tireless campaign that led to 70 percent of the Indian voters in Bagan Pinang backing the BN candidate.

There were also those who said that the internal squabbles among Pakatan Rakyat parties and the manner in which the DAP-led Penang government had handled the Kampung Buah Pala fiasco had affected the support of non-Malays.

Even PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub admitted that the opposition coalition was not doing enough for the Indians while the Chinese voters were fed up with the infighting.

However, some opposition politicians had attributed BN's victory to money politics and postal votes, which consist of one-third of the electorate.

Whatever the case, Mahathir said an in-depth study must be carried out to determine the actual reasons behind this 'extraordinary' win.

"Don't let there be those who claim that while it is clear that they were involved in bribery,

it is not wrong for them to be named as candidates, or even appointed as finance minister," he added.

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