

Don't be complacent, Dr M urges BN

NST-23/3/2004
pg-9.

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on the Barisan Nasional not to be complacent over its resounding victory in yesterday's general election.

This is because the political climate might be different in the next general election, he said.

"Every time a general election is called, there's a climate and if the BN, with such a strong and clear mandate, does not deliver its promises, the voters may once again feel disappointed," he said.

Asked about what he feared most following the BN's victory, Dr Mahathir said: "Usually, after winning big, it will become proud and arrogant ... like Pas in Terengganu, eventually leading to its downfall.

"The BN must be humble and its elected representatives must discharge their duties to the masses' expectations."

The BN has won 198 seats in Parliament while the Opposition bagged 21.

Dr Mahathir said the election climate differed from one election to another.

For instance, in 1995, the BN won

handsomely because the Opposition could not exploit the issues then to their advantage.

He said the coalition performed badly in the 1999 general election owing to the sacking from Umno and jailing of his then deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the Malays lost confidence in Umno and BN.

Dr Mahathir said he saw yesterday's election results as the people's endorsement of the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"He's the one who played a crucial role despite becoming Prime Minister only four months ago, but he succeeded in projecting a good image through his leadership. I'd like to congratulate him," he said.

Dr Mahathir also commented on some voters who were unable to exercise their electoral rights due to missing names in the electoral roll, slip-ups in the printing of party symbols on ballot papers and sending wrong ballot papers to a constituency.

"I'm sad because some people's names are on the electoral roll, but when they go to the polling stations, their names are not there.

"Such glitches should not recur

because the problem was raised before to be rectified," he said.

Asked how he followed the election and the results as he was no longer the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir said: "(I feel) relieved a bit but I was in front of the TV till 2am today.

"Among the results I paid serious attention to was Kedah, but unfortunately (the results) were very late, the last. Kedah BN won 31 of the 36 state seats. Kedah has redeemed its dignity."

Dr Mahathir's message to the newly-elected Members of Parliament and State Assemblmen: "Discharge your duties diligently in the interests of the people and not abstain from attending Dewan Rakyat and State Assembly meetings.

"Don't come for a while just to claim the allowance," he said.

On certain people who used only Proton Saga before becoming elected representatives but after a month becoming a *wakil rakyat*, used Mercedes Benz, he said:

"I think Pak Lah said he wants to audit. He should audit at the early stage. We must check and see what car they used and when they bought it." — Bernama