

**Responsibility of Federal Government to Provide Assistance, Funds - Zahid
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KUCHING, May 3 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said it is the responsibility of the federal government to provide Sarawak with the assistance and funds it needs for development.

He said the government does not channel funds by season or only during an election but based on request or the needs of the state.

"Any government will help its people. Even if there is no election, the assistance and allocations will continue because the federal government is not a government based on seasonal political leadership.

"We don't just come here during the election. We are not bats and flying foxes that only pick fruits during the fruit season; on the other hand, the allocations we provide are continuous," he told Bernama during a visit to the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama)'s operations setup here, today.

Ahmad Zahid was asked to comment on PKR vice president Nurul Izzah Anwar's accusation that the allocations he announced for the General Operations Force at its camp at Batu Kawa yesterday was an attempt to 'buy' votes.

Federal ministers, he said, have been coming to Sarawak lately because it is the responsibility of the BN government to help its component parties in the state election.

"We go to the ground not just to give moral support but also to fulfill development needs. Actually, Sarawak needs a sizeable allocation for infrastructure development, education and other assistance.

"I hope the contributions would not only help the people directly but also project the sincerity of the federal government.

"It shows the commitment of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak who rarely get to go to the ground for long periods and his earnestness to translate his personal support for Adenan and the people of Sarawak," he said.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid who has been visiting areas around Sarawak since nomination day on April 25, described voters' overall response to BN as positive and overwhelming, compared with the previous election.

"I reckon this is happening because we have Team Adenan. He has chosen relatively good candidates even the direct candidates from non-BN coalition. I think there are some hiccups because not everybody will be satisfied with his choice of candidate.

"We are working very hard to reach out to them and managed to resolve most of the problems with three day still remaining of the campaign period. I believe the machinery has now shifted to fifth gear

for us to go into overdrive to reach May 7," he said.

Asked what he liked about Sarawak, Ahmad Zahid said, "the people". "They have a different culture, religion and language but they do away with the differences and this is very amazing," he said.

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