

Harmony 'intact' in Kimanis by-poll

LABUAN: The strong social harmony among the multiracial society in Sabah remained very much intact in the Kimanis by-election nomination day Saturday.



A University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) political researcher, Dr Romzi Ationg (pic), said the multiracial partisans present during the nomination showed the "acceptance and respect" being the underlying principles in realising the goals of peaceful co-existence and peace-building efforts.

"There is still strong social harmony in the State despite the presence of various groups from various political parties with different political ideologies.

"They can talk friendly (openly) and this by-election shows politics will never damage social harmony in Sabah," he said.

He said despite differences in ethnicity, religion and culture, the multiracial society here lives together peacefully and in harmony that is remarkable.

"We can see the people regardless of political ideology making efforts carefully to nurture the social harmony we now cherish," Dr Romzi added.

He said that during the nomination right up to the election campaign, the community would have the opportunity to get to know one another, thus cultivating deeper understanding and acceptance.

"I myself witnessed during the nomination day of people having breakfast anywhere with different symbols on their shirts at the same table.

"I heard them trying to influence each other and apologise should there be any unintentional remarks uttered during the campaign period at the end of the talk.

"I believe this will help avoid political tension and social disharmony.

"I met a couple, whose husband was in Barisan Nasional attire while the wife was in Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan) attire...it was entertaining to see such phenomenon there," he said.

He said the nomination day was deemed to be still in a "relaxed mood" with no untoward incidents taking place, except the slight tense when party supporters from Warisan and Barisan Nasional came close outside the nomination hall gates.