

22 JUN 1996

Asahan

BN WINS BUKIT ASAHAN BY-ELECTION

JASIN, June 22 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional (BN) retained the Bukit Asahan State Assembly seat when its candidate, R. Raghavan won the by-election today with a reduced majority of 3,518.

State MIC chairman, Raghavan, 55, obtained 4,777 votes beating the PAS candidate, Minghat Mamut, 51, who received 1,259 votes and the DAP candidate, Loh Ah Boo, 38, who had 1,027 votes.

Election manager, Mohd Tuslin Kasimon made the announcement at the vote tallying centre at Dewan Hang Kasturi, Selandar at about 8.55 pm.

The percentage of voters who cast their votes was 63.92 per cent with 88 spoilt votes. There are 11,191 registered voters in the area.

The breakdown of voters according to race are Malays 6,325 (56.5 per cent), Chinese 3,476 (31 per cent), Indians 1,316 (11.7 per cent) and others 74.

In the general election last year, BN candidate Datuk Arunasalam obtained 6,396 votes beating the Semangat 46 candidate, Khairuddin Abdullah who had only 1,674 votes.

The by-election was held following the death of Arunasalam in a road accident in Petaling Jaya on April 28.

The by-election was originally scheduled for June 3 but was postponed when the PAS candidate, Haji Abdullah Lasim died before the polling day.

When the new nomination day was held on June 12, two independent candidates who had registered earlier, J. Appalasamy, 37, and Lau Kim Heng, 45, withdrew from the by-election.

Meanwhile, more than 1,000 BN supporters who were at the centre received the news with loud applause before a group of them carried Raghavan and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Zain Abdul Ghani to celebrate the victory.

The PAS candidate, Minghat who is also the state PAS commissioner and Loh were not present at the centre.

The vote tallying and counting process at the 10 polling centres which opened from 8 am till 5.30 pm today went smoothly. The Election Commission (SPR) mobilised 157 officials to handle the by-election.

Mohd Zin, when approached by reporters for comments, said the results again reflected the solid support of the people for the BN government and its struggles under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The voters showed maturity in their assessment and rejected the opposition and their struggles which are based on narrow religious and racial fanaticism," he said.

The campaigns and ceramahs by PAS and DAP which raised many unfounded accusations and allegations against the BN and government were not accepted by the voters, he added.

Mohd Zin also thanked the voters who had given their support to the BN and he expressed confidence that Raghavan would serve the people well based on his wide experience in politics and social work.

Also present at the centre were Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Mohd Ali Rustam, Deputy Education Minister Dr Fong Chan Onn, who is also member of parliament for Selandar, and Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad. -- BERNAMA

TEAM/AO