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Zahid-Reject

PEOPLE HAVE REJECT RACIAL ISSUES- ZAHID

KUALA LUMPUR, May 30 (Bernama) -- The opposition's defeat in three simultaneous by-elections yesterday should be a lesson to it not to harp on racial issues, Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today.

He said the convincing Barisan Nasional (BN) victory in Kuala Selangor, Permatang and Repah by-elections showed that the people accepted the BN and rejected the opposition's racial politics.

This was due to the maturity of the people, he said in a statement.

"PAS is no different from the DAP as both harped on racial issues to fish for votes," he said.

"PAS which claims to fight in the name of Islam has played on issues which could split Malay unity in order to garner votes," he said.

He congratulated Selangor Menteri Besar-designate Datuk Abu Hassan Omar for winning the Permatang seat and hoped the state would continue to progress under his leadership.

Abu Hassan defeated Maskuri Mardzuki from PAS with a 7,780-vote majority.

Zahid also congratulated Gary Gan Chin Yap and Datuk Jamaluddin Adnan for winning the Repah and Kuala Selangor by-elections respectively.

In GOPENG, MCA secretary-general Datuk Dr Ting Chiew Peh said the victories indicated people's continued confidence in the BN.

He said this showed that they wanted continued development and endorsed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's aspiration to achieve Vision 2020.

Repah voters were not easily swayed by DAP's tactics, he told reporters.

In KOTA BAHARU, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the victories showed that the people still subscribed to policies of the BN government.

He said the victories also proved wrong the claims that the BN had lost ground and support after the Teluk Intan by-election setback.

"I am very satisfied with the victories as it means a lot in the BN struggle," he told reporters here.

Another Umno vice-president, Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, said Abu Hassan's victory showed that the people accepted the choice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the BN chairman.

Abu Hassan's selection as the Selangor Menteri Besar Selangor was a right one, Abdullah, who is also the foreign minister, told reporters after receiving Jamaica's Minister for Industry, Investments and Trade Dr Paul Robertson at Wisma Putra.

He believed that the decision to choose a cabinet minister as the Menteri Besar was due to the need for better cooperation between the federal and Selangor governments to ensure the success of several major projects.

Meanwhile, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said the BN's victory in all three by-elections held yesterday indicated that they were "totally different" from the one in Teluk Intan.

"In fact, the loss in Teluk intan was an unforgettable lesson that had spurred Barisan to mobilise all out its machinery to not just win, but have better and quality results," he told newsmen in Kuala Lumpur after launching a book titled "Ripples" authored by Tan Sri Wong Kun Choon.

On the turnout for the three by-elections, Dr Lim said it was

satisfactory as more than 60 per cent of the voters had casted their ballots, unlike in Teluk Intan.

He also said that Gerakan had submitted an analysis on the BN's loss in Teluk Intan to the BN leadership.

The report contains Gerakan's "quick and effective" solutions to win back the seat in the next general election, Dr Lim said.

"Though the Barisan no longer rules Teluk Intan, we will continue to serve the people, as the people know and are confident that the DAP will not or cannot deliver in this place," he added. -- BERNAMA

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