

27/11/1999

A lesson in hindsight awaits the Kadazandusun and Murut on Monday

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IF history indeed determines the future, there is a lot the Kadazandusun and Murut in Sabah can learn from hindsight if they look back at the March State election.

Their mistake in throwing their support behind the Parti Bersatu Sabah in the State election took them out of the political mainstream.

Which side they support in the general election will decide whether or not they will join other communities in reaping the fruits of development in the new millennium.

There should be little difficulty making an objective choice as the facts speak for themselves.

All they have to do is review what the Barisan Nasional Government has done for the State over the past five years compared to what the PBS had done for them over a nine-year period when it was in power.

The Kadazandusun and Murut must take this opportunity to learn from the past and rectify their mistake.

They cannot afford to repeat the error of their ways when they gave their solid support to the PBS enabling it to win 17 seats. Two assemblymen subsequently left to join Umno.

Their decision led to the shock defeat of Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup.

The general election is an opportune moment for them to salvage the situation. They can have another shot at seeing equitable representation in the Government.

Dompok and Kurup, the presidents of United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (Upko) and Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRs), respectively, are contesting in the election.

Dompok is engaged in a three-cornered fight with Janimin Saliun (PBS) and an independent Wasimin Rashim while Kurup is in a straight contest with PBS president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

Victory for Dompok and Kurup will mean victory for the two communities and assurance of representation in the Federal Government.

"Dompok was in the Federal Cabinet before the 1995 general election. If he wins, he might be there (Federal Cabinet) again," said a close aide of the former Chief Minister.

Indeed, indication of this came from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad while on a day-long visit to Sabah last Tuesday when he said that the time had come for the communities to play a bigger role in national administration.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam, echoing Dr Mahathir's sentiments, said only the BN Government, with representatives of all communities, could assure development, economic and political stability in the country.

Osu said the PBS was history and it was not possible for it to make a comeback as proven in the State election.

Osu said it was time for KDM to move on, to look ahead and be practical, not to be influenced by sentiments that could trap it in a time warp, lost and lagging behind the other communities.

Kinabalu is the heartland of the Kadazandusun community who make up 70 per cent of the population, and it is incumbent on Dompok who is contesting to deliver it to the BN.

In Keningau, Kurup who is contesting against Pairin said his bid was not

to take away the latter's title of Kadazandusun Huguan Siou (Kadazandusun paramount or brave leader).

"Whether Pairin wins or loses, he is still the Huguan Siou. But even if he wins, Pairin is not capable of bringing development to Keningau," Kurup said.

Kurup hopes that the people will vote for BN as Keningau, which had been held by PBS for a long time, needs a change for the better in all aspects.

In a nutshell, the two communities have to decide whether they want development and a future they can be proud of or if they want to languish in the backwaters of progress.

They have to think about future generations who will either look back with thanks or with regret at the mistakes of their forefathers.

In the final analysis, the BN way is the only way for the Kadazandusun and Murut.

There can be no mistake in making that decision.

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