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BN back in power (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Barisan Nasional has won another five-year mandate to steer the country into the new millennium.

The BN secured its two-thirds in the 193-seat Parliament at 2.05am when its tally of seats touched 132 to the cheers of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other BN figures gathered at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The BN also won control of all the State Legislative Assemblies with the exception of Kelantan and Terengganu.

Pas retained its hold on Kelantan while making a strong advance in Terengganu but the DAP suffered severe losses, especially, in Penang.

DAP's secretary-general Lim Kit Siang and deputy chairman Karpal Singh both lost in the Penang parliamentary seats of Bukit Bendera and Jelutong respectively.

Lim also lost in the Kebun Bunga State constituency and Karpal in the Datuk Keramat State seat.

The former Opposition Leader, an MP since his first election in 1969, met his Waterloo at the hands of Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye (BN) by a majority of more than 300 votes.

The BN made the strongest advance in Penang, almost wiping out the DAP from the State Legislative Assembly in a sweep reminiscent of the 1995 polls.

The BN also performed strongly in Sarawak and Sabah where only parliamentary elections were held.

However, the coalition conceded more seats to Pas in Kedah and Perlis.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad easily retained his seat in Kubang Pasu against Ahmad Subky Latif of Pas.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was also returned to his Kepala Batas seat with a majority of 11,175 votes.

Several Ministers and Deputy Ministers were among the upset losses as the results rolled in.

Among them were Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed in Jeli, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob in Parit and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Hamid Othman who lost to author of "Shit" Prof Shanon Ahmad in Sik.

Deputy Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Bakar Daud, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Ibrahim Ali and Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mohktar Ahmad were also among those who lost.

At press time, Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was one of the three Keadilan candidates who won. She defeated Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad.

Its deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar lost to Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Tan Chai Ho while supreme council member Irene Fernandez lost in the Subang parliamentary constituency.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik retained his seat in Beruas while International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz won in Kuala Kangsar.

First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin retained his Merbok seat with a comfortable majority while Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn defeated Tian Chua (Keadilan) in Selandar, Melaka.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Abdul Razak made it with a narrow margin in Pekan while Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar retained his Permatang seat.

In the hotly-contested Bukit Bintang parliamentary constituency in the Federal Territory, DAP's Fong Kui Lun defeated the BN incumbent, Dr Lee Chong Meng.

Among the Pas wins were its president Datuk Fadzil Mohd Noor in Pendang and Mohamad Sabu in Kuala Kedah. But its sole candidate in the Federal Territory lost to BN's Datuk Dr Suleiman Mohamed in Titiwangsa.

DAP also retained Cheras and Seputeh in the Federal Territory while Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) won two seats in Sabah.

Polling went on smoothly today without any reported untoward incidents.

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