

04 DEC 1999

Annuar-Punish

DON'T PUNISH PEOPLE OF KELANTAN FOR BN'S DEFEAT

KOTA BAHARU, Dec 4 (Bernama) -- The Kelantan Barisan Nasional (BN) machinery and leaders should not be too frustrated with the party's defeat in the general election on Monday to the extent of urging the federal government to punish the people of Kelantan, said state BN chairman Datuk Annuar Musa.

He said all levels of the party machinery and leaders must look at the results in the wider context because the general election would be held again five years from now and the votes of the Kelantan people would be needed.

"What is more important is for us to look within Umno and BN and at the reasons for the defeat so that we can look toward the future and further strengthen the party," he said at a press conference at his residence in Peringat, near here today.

He said in the wider context, BN should look at Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang collectively and could not treat the PAS problem as being confined only to Kelantan but should tackle it together.

In addition, he said, the government's liberal attitude on the PAS machinery such as the slanders by the party's official organ, Harakah, and the party's machinery which had held public rallies to spread lies had affected Umno.

Annuar, who is also Rural Development Minister and was defeated by Keadilan's Muhamad Mustapha for the Peringat parliamentary seat, said it was clear that PAS had contravened the law but the government was too tolerant with the party.

He also proposed that the contest for posts in Umno should not be held more often than the general election that is once every five years as, according to him, the frequent contests within the party could weaken it.

In addition, he said Umno also needed more activists to carry out party work at the lower level and not burdened with too much government functions.

He also cited Umno's failure to attract the interest of the younger generation as the party's inability to detect the strong sentiments among the young voters.

As such, Umno and the BN must continue to get closer to the people despite the defeat in Kelantan and the leaders could not afford to neglect them, he said.

On the discovery of more than 1,000 postal votes for the Peringat parliamentary constituency which did not reach the vote counting centre and were not counted, he said he had not decided to take any action and would only decide after meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

-- BERNAMA

MNY LAT AO