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Election-Kelantan (Focus)  
KELANTAN REMAINS IN PAS HANDS

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- The Kelantan people have again chosen to remain under PAS rule by rejecting Barisan Nasional in yesterday's general election.

This means that PAS has been voted into power for the third consecutive time since 1990.

This time around PAS improved its showing by winning 41 of the 43 state seats and 10 of 14 parliamentary seats. The other two state seats were won by BN while three of the parliamentary seats went to Keadilan, PAS' partner in the Barisan Alternatif, and the remaining one to BN.

In the 1995 election, PAS won 24 state and six parliamentary seats, while its partner in Angkatan Perpaduan Ummah, Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46) which was then led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, won 12 state and six parliamentary seats.

When S46 was dissolved in 1996, two of its assemblymen joined PAS while the rest, including its MPs, followed Tengku Razaleigh into Umno.

Among Umno leaders who won on either BN or S46 ticket in 1995 but lost this time are Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamad, Rural Development Minister Datuk Annuar Musa and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ibrahim Ali.

Before the 1990 general election, Kelantan was under BN rule for 12 continuous years after it toppled PAS in the 1978 state election. PAS had then ruled the state for four consecutive terms since the first post-independence general election in 1959.

Yesterday's election results were reminiscent of the 1978 election. In that election which was held in March, separately from other state elections, PAS won only two of the 36 state seats while in the general election that followed a few months later PAS won only one of 12 parliamentary seats.

Yesterday's outcome clearly showed that the people of Kelantan wanted to be under opposition rule and have rejected the commitment shown by top BN leaders to bring Kelantan into the mainstream of national development.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and ministers were among BN leaders who made numerous trips to the ground during the election campaign pledging to pull up Kelantan which is considered the most backward state in terms of development.

As a sign of BN's commitment and sincerity, Dr Mahathir himself proceeded with his trip to Kelantan just two days before polling although he had not yet fully recovered from a cold.

There he performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the third bridge across Sungai Kelantan, launched a flood mitigation project and laid the foundation stone for the Kelantan Islamic Economic Centre.

These three projects costing hundreds of millions of ringgit, if implemented, could create thousands of jobs, something which was sorely lacking under the PAS administration.

The results must surely have come as a disappointment to many Kelantanese who wanted to see Tengku Razaleigh play a more important role in the national political arena.

To them, Tengku Razaleigh is one person with the potential to go higher in the national political hierarchy, even assuming the post of Prime Minister.

However, his supporters should not be too disappointed as even for a

man of Tengku Razaleigh's stature and experience, it was beyond him to change the situation overnight.

It should be noted that Tengku Razaleigh was appointed the Kelantan Umno chief just about five months before the election was called.

Surely, it would be expecting too much of him to cure in such a short period the various "ills" that had been affecting the state Umno all this while.

Kelantan Umno had been plagued by factionalism among its leaders ever since Tengku Razalieggh stopped being its liaison committee chief in 1984 after having held the post since 1972.

The situation worsened when he refused to join the new Umno and set up S46 after Umno was deregistered as a result of the party's election results in 1987 being challenged in court.

Signs of better understanding among the state Umno leaders emerged soon after Tengku Razaleigh was appointed by Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, to the state Umno chief's post which was held by Dr Mahathir.

Despite the trouncing, it is not the end of the road for BN in Kelantan. Tengku Razaleigh should be given time and another chance to strengthen Umno to carry on the unfinished struggle.

-- BERNAMA

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