

30 NOV 1999

Kelantan-Government

NIK AZIZ RETAINS FORMER EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LINE-UP

KOTA BAHARU, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today the previous state executive councillors will be retained following PAS' return to power in the state in yesterday's general election.

This was because PAS' thumping victory was due to the hard work and cooperation of the state executive councillors who had served under him all this while, he told reporters in his first statement following the official announcement of the results for the state by the Election Commission.

PAS won 41 of the 43 state seats with the remaining two -- Galas and Paloh -- going to the BN. Nik Aziz retained his Chempaka state seat.

All the state executive councillors in the previous state government won their seats except for Datuk Abdul Halim Mohamed who did not seek re-election.

They are Deputy Menteri Besar Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman who won in Kijang, Muhammad Daud (Kenali) Omar Muhammad (Perupok) Ahmad Yakub (Pasir) Hassan Abdullah (Pengkalan Pasir) and Abdullah Yakub (Air Lanas) while Datuk Abdul Halim did not seek re-election.

Nik Aziz, is expected to make a minor reshuffle of their portfolios.

Nik Aziz, who is also the PAS spiritual leader, said the palace had been informed of PAS' victory and he and the other PAS leaders were awaiting the sultan's consent to form the state government and the swearing-in would be held at any time.

He also said that he had sent his congratulations to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad through a federal officer this morning on the the Barisan Nasional's (BN) victory in the election which saw the coalition obtaining a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

In jest, he said Dr Mahathir should also congratulate him for retaining the Kelantan government.

Asked about the defeat of all the federal ministers from Kelantan, he said it would not affect development in the state as PAS was capable of implementing the projects.

"We have a Federal Development Department which represents the federal government and if the allocation is channeled to the state government, all the development can be done," he said.

He hoped that the federal government would work with the PAS government in Kelantan for the benefit of the people.

The state government under his leadership was always open and gave full cooperation to the federal government to implement development programmes including several ongoing projects, he said.

They included the RM166 million Wakaf Che Yeh-Tendong bridge across Sungai Kelantan in Pasir Mas and the extension of the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport runway in Pengkalan Chepa.

On PAS' success in forming the state government in Terengganu, he said the Kelantan PAS government was happy with the results in that state and hoped that the two state governments would be able to cooperate.

On PAS' victory in Kelantan, Nik Aziz said it showed that the people still chose PAS despite the BN's claims in its election campaign that Kelantan had not developed under PAS rule.

He said development was no longer an issue with the people because they

knew that whoever governed would automatically bring development.

He said the BN and Umno had failed to win over the voters in Terengganu and Kelantan because their leaders had rejected morals by committing corruption and abuse.

On allegations that cronyism and nepotism within Umno had caused the BN's defeat, Nik Aziz said giving priority to one's family and children was allowed in Islam as long as those given the position or post were qualified and it did not incur the people's wrath.

A leader was also allowed to hold a position for life if he was sane and qualified to do the job, he added.

He said he conceded that the prime minister was smart but his weakness was that he used his intelligence for secular purposes "so I oppose in the interest of Islam."

He also regretted that the television stations and newspapers had been used to the hilt to help in the BN's campaign to attack the opposition.

"The media should serve as the voice of the people of Malaysia, not that of the media lords," he said.

-- BERNAMA