

30 NOV 1999

Election-Ghafar (reaction)

OVER CONFIDENT BLAMED FOR BN'S DEFEAT IN SOME SEATS

MELAKA, Nov 30 (Bernama) -- Over confident due to resounding victory in past elections was the reason for Barisan Nasional (BN)'s defeat in some seats, said former deputy prime minister Tun Abdul Ghafar Baba said today.

He said some Umno leaders were also banking on endorsement from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to win and so did not try hard to neutralise the opposition's campaign.

The defeat was also due to the opposition taking advantage of the sacking of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to gain sympathy votes, he told reporters.

"The election this time is a lesson to us all, not to take lightly campaigns by the opposition," he said.

On BN's failure to recapture Kelantan for the third time, Ghafar said there was nothing it could do if the people still wanted PAS.

"They prefer to hear stories about voting PAS if they want to go to heaven. The BN cannot promise them heaven," he said.

On the defeat of several religious personalities from Umno, he said it showed that democracy was alive in Malaysia.

"Our people speak the truth but the people believe the lies spread by the opposition," said Ghafar, referring to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Umno Information Chief Datuk Dr Yusof Nor and Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad.

Ghafar won the Batu Berendam seat by 7,105-vote majority when he polled 37,656 votes to beat Khalid Bin Jaafar of Keadilan who received 30,551 votes.

--BERNAMA

AD abg