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Sabah-Abdullah

VICTORY IS ENDORSEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY, SAYS DPM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 13 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional's (BN) victory in the Sabah state election reflected the electorate's endorsement of the philosophy of development and peace advocated by the coalition, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said last night.

"The BN puts unity, goodwill, interracial cooperation and co-existence first. That's why the electorate prefers the BN," he said.

Abdullah was commenting on the BN's return to power in Sabah during a live teleconference from Kota Kinabalu over Radio Television Malaysia last night with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here.

The BN won 31 of the 48 Sabah state legislative assembly seats, leaving Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) trailing with 17 seats after all results were declared just after midnight.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir himself, in his rounds of meet-the people sessions during campaigning, had contributed much towards convincing the electorate of the BN's determination to bring progress and development to Sabah.

Abdullah said however he noted that the election this time around also saw ethnic sentiments still entrenched among the Kadazandusuns.

However, Abdullah said the BN had succeeded in capturing areas which had large Kadazandusun population, including Kawang which was considered a "grey" area all this while.

"So we also look at areas with large Kadazandusun voters, (but) succeeded in attracting their attention and received support," he said.

Datuk Osu Sukam won in Kawang with a bigger majority, that is 2,213 votes, compared with only 64 votes in the 1994 state elections.

He defeated four other candidates in the area which had more than 32 per cent non-Muslim Bumiputera voters.

Abdullah also expressed regrets over the defeat suffered by two major leaders of the Kadazandusun community, that is Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and Datuk Joseph Kurup.

Abdullah also said Sabahans were now beginning to accept the BN concept and philosophy and were more confident with the way BN was representing all communities in Sabah through the government formed. On development in Sabah, Abdullah said it would be more rapid with the BN victory.

"We have also clarified, we cannot do everything within the four-year time frame but we have plans for the future, and the 7th Malaysia Plan, Vision 2020 which focused on the development of Sabah and its people and these convinced them," he said.

He said BN had succeeded in convincing the people of Sabah that it had the capability and capacity to bring development to the state and this was well received by the people.

Abdullah said BN would have the two-thirds majority when it appoints six state assemblymen later.

Sabah Umno Liaison Chief, Datuk Osu Sukam said the success of all 24 Umno candidates in the election could further convince the people on the presence of Umno in Sabah.

However, the BN was also sad that there were seats which it should have won but lost instead, maybe due to the strong sentiments that were still prevalent in the areas concerned.

Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob who was also BN elections director, said Dr Mahathir's visit to Sabah on a number of occasions had

strengthened the spirit of the BN workers in the state to strive for victory.

-- BERNAMA

RV APG AO