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Ghani-Fortress

JOHOR IS STILL THE COUNTRY'S FORTRESS FOR SOLIDARITY, SAYS GHANI

JOHOR BAHRU, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- The results of the last general election in November showed that Johor is still the "fortress for solidarity" in the country, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said.

He said the spirit of close cooperation and tolerance shown by the multi-racial community in Johor which had long existed was still prevailing and this had been a major factor in the overwhelming success by Barisan Nasional (BN) in the state.

He described the views expressed by some people who claimed that the people of Johor were not smart particularly in making their choice in the last general election as shallow.

"We are not stupid...in fact, Johor is among the most advanced states in the country," he said when met at the open house held by the Johor Baharu Chinese Federation and the Chinese Associations of Johor Baharu in conjunction with the Chinese New year at Sekolah Menengah Foon Yew, here today.

In the last general election, BN made a clean sweep winning all the 20 parliamentary and 40 state seats in Johor.

Abdul Ghani said he appreciated the contribution of the Johor Baharu Chinese Federation all this while and expressed his gratitude to the Chinese community for appreciating the successes achieved by the BN administration.

"Your support shows that you appreciate all the efforts taken by the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said.

At the function, Abdul Ghani also announced the state government's allocation of RM100,000 for Kolej Selatan here.

Meanwhile, he said he had not been informed of the date for the swearing in of two more State Exco members.

"It's up to the Sultan of Johor to determine the date," he said.

He said the two State Exco members, Ahmad Zahri Jamil and Mohd Salikon Sarpin were not eligible yet to attend the weekly State Exco meeting as they had not taken the oath of secrecy.

"At the moment, we are only holding ordinary meetings with the two Exco members concerned," the Menteri Besar said.

Abdul Ghani and eight State Exco members took their oath of office in front of the Sultan of Johor at Istana Besar, here on Dec 10.

The Exco members who had been sworn in were Datuk Jimmy Low, Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek, Adam Abdul Hamid, Halimah Mohamed Sadique, Othman Jais, Datuk K.S.Balakrishnan, Hamzah Ramli and Samat Aripin.

Ahmad Zahri and Mohd Salikon did not take their oath of office on that day as the enactment on the addition to the number of State Exco members from eight to 10 had not been tabled at and approved by the State Assembly.

The amendment to the relevant clause pertaining to the number of State Exco members was approved by the Assembly on Dec 20.

Ahmad Zahri is the State Exco for Education, Manpower, Youth, Sports and Culture while Mohd Salikon is the Exco for Industrial and Entrepreneur Development, Small- and Medium-Industries, Science and Technology.

They are among the six new faces in the new Exco line-up. The other new faces are Othman, Balakrishnan, Hamzah and Samat.

-- BERNAMA

MKO AO

