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Ling: BN ensures strong economy

KULIM, Mon. - The people, especially the Chinese, should realise it was the Government and not Opposition parties, which steered the country out of the recent economic downturn.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liang Sik said the Opposition failed to come up with any constructive suggestions during the "dark times" and were instead only able to criticise and condemn everything the Government did.

The people should therefore ignore the Opposition and realise it was of no use to vote for them as they were only good at criticising.

Dr Ling said this to reporters after attending a dinner with the Chinese community at the Chiao Min School hall here last night.

Also present was Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

Dr Ling said MCA would work hard to ensure BN continued to enjoy the support of the Chinese, adding that the party and the coalition had brought much progress for the Chinese.

He cited as an example the establishment of the Tunku Abdul Rahman College which only had 5,000 students five years ago but had now expanded with branches in Johor, Perak Pahang and Penang.

The total student enrolment at the college now stood at about 23,000.

In the Lunas by-election, BN's S. Anthonysamy faces Keadilan's Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Independent candidate N. Letchumanan.

On criticism that he was absent in Lunas for the past four days, Dr Ling said while it was true he was not present, there were other top MCA leaders delegated to help the BN machinery.

He said the Opposition would try to make an issue of everything and that the people should just ignore them.

Yesterday, Saifuddin said he received feedback that Umno and the MIC had allegedly complained that the MCA and Gerakan were not working aggressively enough to campaign for the BN.

He said the MCA and Gerakan top guns galvanised their machinery after the Umno and MIC leadership made their views known to their fellow component party members.

In Kuala Lumpur, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the Chinese community should support the Barisan Nasional as they were now in a comfortable position economically due to its policies.

The Government saved many businessmen from becoming bankrupt during the economic crisis.

Speaking at his ministry after receiving the Chinese Defence Minister General Chi Haotian, he said the Government took care of the two most important matters for the community - economic prosperity and education.

Najib said the education system for Chinese primary schools had not been changed and the teaching of Mandarin was guaranteed.

"The school administration board will also remain unchanged.

"I hope everyone will think rationally and the community should understand their future is guaranteed under the administration of the BN."

A local Malay daily reported today that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was disappointed with the Dong Jiao Zhong Chinese education movement that was said to be supporting the Opposition in the by-election.

The movement opposes the Vision Schools concept saying it fears the identity of Chinese schools might be eroded and Bahasa Malaysia would

eventually become the medium of instruction in these schools.

In Sungai Siput, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said the voters in Lunas should evaluate the Opposition's struggle which was to divide Malaysians using racial and religious sentiments.

He said they should not allow themselves to be influenced by these tactics which could be detrimental to the country's progress.

The Opposition had divided the Malays before and now was trying to split the Chinese and Indian communities, he said.

"What will happen to Malaysians after this? Do we want to see this racial division in our country?" he told a Press conference after visiting residents at the Kampung Lintang Gerakan branch here.

Dr Lim, who is Primary Industries Minister said the tactics used by the Opposition could affect relations among the ethnic groups.

"The Opposition is only concerned about their political agenda without considering the consequences. The religious and racial sentiments used by them can only confuse the people."

In Kulim, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein today advised voters in Lunas not to make a decision that they would later regret.

"Let common sense prevail ...do not make decisions that we will regret later on."

He said this after visiting several polling stations in the constituency.

Hishammuddin said that the voters had been misled and confused by the Opposition, who had gone out of their way to win votes by harping on racial and religious issues.

"It is important for the voters to decide for the betterment of the children and the future."

On DAP's chairman Lim Kit Siang's visit to the constituency to help in the Keadilan campaign, Hishammuddin said BN was not interested in such sandiwara (drama).

The BN was serious in everything it did, he said.

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