

11/06/2000

Mohd Isa satisfied with victory

PORT DICKSON, Sat. - State Barisan Nasional chief and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad said he was satisfied with the ruling coalition's victory despite the reduced majority in the Teluk Kemang parliamentary by-election.

He said the decrease was due to several factors, particularly a drop in voter turnout.

BN candidate S. Sothinathan of the MIC won with a 5,972-vote majority, polling 24,500 votes against Parti Keadilan Nasional's Ruslan Kasim's 18,528 votes.

The Teluk Kemang parliamentary constituency encompasses five State constituencies - Chembong, Pasir Panjang, Si Rusa, Linggi and Lukut.

State Assemblyman Datuk Dr Yeow Chai Thiam said he had sent a report on BN's poor showing in Lukut to Mohd Isa and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

He admitted that the recent announcement to allow pig farming at the Integrated Pig Farming Area had irked farmers who had not bought lots there.

"They were probably hoping the Government would allow them to continue pig farming the traditional way at Bukit Pelandok. By voting for the Opposition, they probably wanted to put the message across that they were not satisfied with the Government," he said.

State MIC chief Datuk T. Marimuthu said they had expected Sothinathan to win with a bigger majority. He said the MIC would conduct a post-mortem.

In Shah Alam, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar said the BN victory indicated that the people were still in favour of the ruling party under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Meanwhile, Opposition party leaders have described the reduced BN majority in the by-election as a sign of growing support for the Opposition coalition.

Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor said it showed that support for the Opposition was growing.

"Information received showed that a majority of the younger generation had supported the Opposition in the by-election," he said at a dinner with Opposition front leaders in Petaling Jaya.

Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said its candidate had garnered more support than the BN candidate from the police and armed forces who voted by post.

She said the Opposition had also received strong support from the Chinese voters when it obtained the majority of the votes in Lukut. The Chinese community formed the majority of constituents in that area.

Keadilan Youth chief Mohd Ezam Mohd Noor said as the Opposition's by-election director, he was pleased with the outcome.

He said the Opposition front had combined well to deny BN's target of achieving a bigger majority.

He claimed that the Election Commission had transferred the names of 1,200 people who had registered under the Teluk Kemang parliamentary constituency.

"We will certainly take up the matter with the commission," he said when contacted at the Keadilan operations centre.

EC chairman Datuk Omar Hashim said it would investigate why the voter

turnout in the by-election dipped below 70 per cent.

He said while voter turnout for by-elections was usually lower than during general elections, the 68.18 per cent outing was worrying.

On claims by some voters that their names were missing from the electoral roll, Omar said they should have checked with the commission earlier.