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Likas-Reaction

LANDSLIDE WIN SIGN OF CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN BN

KUALA LUMPUR, July 21 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional's (BN) thumping victory in the Likas by-election today is a strong testimony of the people's confidence in the ruling party, BN leaders said.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib said the people of Likas had shown that the BN was still the party to lead the nation despite attempts by the opposition to tarnish its image.

"Their (the opposition) scare tactics did not work this time around as the people of Likas are mature and know what is right and what is wrong...it is also an endorsement for (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad)," he said.

While the opposition, particularly Parti Keadilan Nasional, was busy trying to run down the government, the BN was working hard to improve the people's well-being, he said.

"The people of Likas have also shown that the aggressive behaviour of Keadilan in its campaigning has been rejected. They cannot behave in such a manner to win the hearts of the people," he added.

In the four-way contest, BN's Datuk Yong Teck Lee retained the seat with an increased majority of 7,541 votes.

He polled 9,758 votes compared with 2,217 votes by Dr Chong Eng Leong of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), 1,724 by Christina Liew of Parti Keadilan Nasional and 50 by Independent Joshua Kong.

In the 1999 state election, Yong won with a majority of 4,962 votes.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the result was a strong endorsement for the leadership of Dr Mahathir and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"The result is an answer to all the criticisms hurled at the BN leadership. It shows that the ruling party looks after the people no matter where they are in the country," he said.

He said the reduced votes for PBS, once a force to be reckoned with in Sabah politics, showed that it was losing support and that PBS should come into the BN fold to survive.

"As for Keadilan, the result reflects the people's rejection of the violent political strategies practised by the party. They could not do what they did in the Lunas by-election," he said.

People's Progressive Party (PPP) president Datuk M. Kayveas said the BN win was expected as the government had proven itself in bringing development.

"They (the opposition) can go to the courts but the people have shown that they are the decision makers, and not certain politicians," he said.

"The result also indicates that the people of Likas are mature enough to pick the best for themselves, and that they want to see continued development," he added.

Gerakan acting president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the people had reaffirmed their confidence in the BN by giving it the landslide win.

"It also shows the close working relationship between the BN component parties, which proves to be an important factor in the crushing win," he said.

He said the Likas voters had also rejected the negative politics practised by the PBS and Keadilan during the campaigning.

Federal Territory Umno chief Datuk Tengku Adnan Mansor said the result was a clear indication that the people of Sabah rejected the opposition

which he claimed spread lies about the government and its leaders.

"The BN's big win clearly shows that the people do not like the style adopted by the opposition, especially the use of force," he said.

Tengku Adnan, who is Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said the bigger majority achieved by Yong despite a lower turnout, was also an endorsement by the people of the present system of administration.

In KOTA KINABALU, BN Youth chairman Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the victory was a clear message that the people wanted the BN to continue with the state's development agenda.

"Previously they had hurled all sorts of allegations and said we did not have support, but today's big majority clearly shows that the people are still together with the BN," he told reporters.

Hishammuddin said the victory would spur the BN to continue with its programmes until the next general election.

He said the BN Youth's focus after this would be the Sarawak state election, which should be held by Nov 18 this year.

"My friends and I will go to Sarawak, and we will be mindful of the local sensitivities to work as a team to ensure BN's victory in the state," he said.

Sabah Chief Minister and state BN chief Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said the landslide victory was the result of the close cooperation among the BN component parties and their leaders.

"I thank the BN components and our friends from the peninsula, the (BN) Youth movements and Puteri Umno," he said.

Paying tribute to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, he said: "We thank you very much Pak Lah, without you we can't achieve such a huge majority."

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) president Tan Sri Joseph Kurup said Yong's big win showed that more people in Sabah had accepted the BN.

"The victory also indicates that the Kadazandusun and Murut communities in the state are with the BN," he said.

Sabah Gerakan chief Datuk Jimmy Chok Kon Phin said the resounding victory was a "well deserved victory, a victory for the rakyat of Sabah".

State MIC chief V. Jothy said the result indicated that most people in Sabah no longer supported the opposition.

"Their support for BN was evident in the heavy majority and we are thankful for the people in Likas for giving BN the mandate," he said.

United Pasok Momogun Kadazan Murut Organisation (UPKO) secretary-general Datuk Wences Anggang said the victory showed that all sections of people, regardless of race, had swung their votes in favour of the BN.

"This is healthy. The voters know what to choose because it is only the BN that will contribute to every section of people," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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