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Gaya-BN

BN RETAINS GAYA WITH THREEFOLD INCREASE IN MAJORITY

KOTA KINABALU, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Voters in the Gaya parliamentary constituency gave a stronger mandate to the Barisan Nasional (BN) when its candidate Liew Teck Chan retained the seat with a 11,923-vote majority in the by-election today.

Liew, 54, who is vice-president of Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), polled 15,639 votes against 3,716 by his closest rival Hiew King Cheu of DAP.

Another candidate Christina Liew, 50, from Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) received 2,613 votes.

The results were announced by Returning Officer Alijus Sipil at 9.15pm.

Liew's winning majority is almost three times that of the 4,117 secured by BN in the 1999 general election despite a much lower voter turnout of 44.73 per cent this time as compared to 58.14 per cent in the last general election.

The Maksak Hall in Likas reverberated with a thunderous applause from BN supporters as soon as Alijus announced the results.

BN component party leaders hailed the results as proof of the solid support from the people to the ruling coalition.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, in his speech, thanked voters in the constituency for giving a resounding victory to the BN.

He also thanked BN election workers for their hardwork in ensuring BN's victory.

"I wish to take this opportunity to say that all the projects proposed by Datuk Yong Teck Lee (former Gaya MP) will be continued by the new MP," he said.

In his victory speech, Liew thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Abdullah and BN component party leaders for their trust and confidence in picking him as the candidate for the constituency.

He also expressed his gratitude to the voters for showing their confidence in BN.

"Thank you for voting BN...this victory is the victory of the people in Gaya, said Liew to the thunderous applause from BN supporters.

Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat also expressed his appreciation to the voters and his colleagues in BN, including leaders from Peninsular Malaysia who came to campaign in the by-election.

"My sincere thanks to all of you, to Umno national leadership, Umno Youth, Wanita Umno and Puteri Umno...thank you to all," said Chong, who is also Sabah BN chairman.

The Gaya seat fell vacant following the disqualification of Yong, who is SAPP president, after he was found to have committed an election offence in the 1999 state election.

-- BERNAMA

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