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Ketari-Reaction

BN WINS ON SUPPORT OF ALL RACES, SAYS DPM

BENTONG, March 31 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional's (BN) resounding win in the Ketari state by-election today shows that the people's confidence in the government is increasing, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the winning majority obtained today was almost 10 times that of the 1999 general election, and support from all races had also strengthened.

"Although the support in Ketari (South) and Perting was not enough to overcome the DAP (in these areas), it is clearly far better than that obtained by us in the last election," he told reporters soon after the results were announced here tonight.

Abdullah said the win was a victory for people who wanted development and an endorsement for a leadership which gave priority to security and stability.

BN's Yum Ah Ha beat DAP's Choong Siew Onn by a majority of 2,204 votes in a straight fight.

In the 1999 general election, BN's Datuk Loke Koon Kam defeated Choong by a majority of 231 votes. The by-election was called after Loke died of cancer on March 3.

Abdullah, who is Umno deputy president, congratulated Yum for his victory.

He also thanked workers from all BN component parties, IPF and KIMMA who had worked hard for the victory.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob gave an assurance that all pledges made by the BN during the election campaign would be fulfilled.

"This BN win by a big majority shows that the people accept the BN government under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad," said Adnan, who is BN Ketari election director.

Adnan said the strong support shown by the people would inspire the Pahang government to bring more development.

He also thanked the BN election machinery from Umno, MCA, MIC, Gerakan as well as the support from IPF and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which had contributed to the victory.

Meanwhile, the newly elected Ketari Assemblyman Yum Ah Ha pledged to carry out his responsibilities as required of an assemblyman chosen by the people of Ketari.

He thanked Dr Mahathir for his trust on him as the BN candidate and thanked those who had given their support and cooperation which had led to the BN victory.

"All the problems faced by the people in the constituency will be overcome as much as possible," he said.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said he was happy with the result and the bigger majority obtained which showed a 10-fold increase from the 1999 general election, with support for the BN increasing in every polling station although BN lost in Perting and 50-50 in Ketari Tengah.

"The best results were in Kampung Janda Baik and Genting Highlands with 78 per cent of the votes going to BN," he said.

He said in Benus, 73 per cent of the voters voted for BN, Ketari (70 per cent) and Ketari Selatan (60 per cent).

"In Perting, the support for BN showed an increase compared to the 1999 general election from 28 per cent to 34 per cent," he said.

BN Youth chairman Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the thumping win

by BN showed that the people valued the BN concept of giving priority to unity, harmony and development.

"The BN Youth's approach of reaching out to the voters has obviously paid off," he said in a statement.

He hoped that Yum would live up to the expectations of the people and would go to the ground to serve the people.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all voters in the constituency for their support and the confidence they place in us," said Hishammuddin, who is also Umno Youth head.

MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said the success was proof of the people's continued support for the leadership of Dr Mahathir and BN's concept of promoting racial unity.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the results indicated that the people had placed a lot of trust on the BN again, and this was due to the strong leadership of Dr Mahathir.

PPP president Datuk M. Kayveas said the outcome showed that opposition parties did not have vision to struggle for the country.

Choong said although he was disappointed to have lost for the third time, he was thankful to the more than 4,000 people who voted him.

DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock said that from the outset DAP had considered the by-election an uphill battle.

Kerk said that DAP had expected to lose by about 1,000 votes, and in the worst-case scenario, 3,000 votes.

"The majority of 2,204 confirms our fear," he said.

He said DAP was disappointed with the defeat but was happy that it could maintain support in its stronghold in Perting.

He admitted that the popularity of former two-term Bentong Member of Parliament Datuk Lim Ah Lek had contributed to BN's win.

Ketari is one of four state seats under the Bentong parliamentary constituency.

-- BERNAMA

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