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Gaya-Reaction (Leaders)

RESOUNDING VICTORY SHOWS PEOPLE ARE ALL FOR BN

KOTA KINABALU, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Leaders of the Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties have described the coalition's thumping victory in the Gaya parliamentary by-election as a clear proof that the people are very much for the BN.

The victory with a threefold increase in majority also shows that the BN has gained more support following the re-admission of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) into the BN early this year.

PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan said the party was happy that BN candidate Liew Teck Chan had won the by-election with a very big majority.

"The 11,000-over majority is a very comfortable and satisfactory win. I do believe the people have indicated their support for the BN as well as PBS which has become part of them (the BN)," he told reporters at the vote-tallying centre at Dewan Maksak, near here, tonight.

Pairin said the victory augured well for the people and the government.

He hoped that the government would continue to resolve outstanding issues such as those on illegal immigrants and development projects.

"I hope the government will take all these into consideration after getting a huge majority from the people in Gaya. Personally, I'm very, very happy with the result and thank all the supporters regardless of race, for contributing to the increased majority for the BN."

His deputy Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili said the victory showed that PBS supporters had truly come home to the BN.

"It needed a by-election to prove that, but it's great and augurs well with the call of unity of the people of Sabah. BN won convincingly in all polling centres previously dominated by PBS, showing that the party has really delivered," said Ongkili.

In the by-election, BN's Liew Teck Chan polled 15,639 votes against the 3,716 obtained by Hiew King Cheu of DAP. Christina Liew of Parti Keadilan Nasional could only manage 2,613 votes and lost her deposit.

Sabah Umno chairman Datuk Musa Aman said the victory was a thumping endorsement from the people for the ruling coalition.

"This shows solid support from the Gaya voters for the BN candidate, and I thank all BN campaigners from throughout the country, especially Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he said.

Congratulating Liew and BN party workers for the victory, United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) president Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said the result augured well for political stability in the state.

"With this victory we can look forward to more development for the state as what the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said this is the time to concentrate on development in Sabah."

Asked whether the victory shows that PBS supporters are with the party, Dompok said tonight's result showed that the people supported the PBS' return to BN.

Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) president Datuk Yong Teck Lee said he was extremely pleased with the victory of the BN candidate whom he regards as a very capable person to continue the service to the people of Gaya.

"The result shows that a lot of people have come out to show their support for the BN and also to show that they have the confidence in the BN to solve the problem of the rakyat," said Yong, who was the MP for Gaya

until his disqualification which led to the by-election.

Sabah MIC chairman V.Jothi said the win showed that the people had faith in BN, especially in implementing development programmes.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib said it was an overwhelming majority for BN and this showed that the support for the coalition had increased.

"The entry of PBS has helped to increase the majority and we see that voters in Sabah have rejected opposition parties," he said.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob concurred with Muhammad, saying the people have rejected the opposition.

"This shows that although the percentage turnout has dropped, they are still not supporting the candidates of the other parties, and this speaks well of the BN's ability," he said.

The victory has also won praise from a non-BN party, the Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress (KIMMA) which described it as a great success.

"KIMMA congratulates BN and the people for making the wise vote," its secretary-general Amir Hamsa said.

-- BERNAMA

AT JS YBY