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By-elections-Siam

SIAMESE COMMUNITY GIVES FULL SUPPORT TO BN

By: Abdul Halim Taib

KUALA LUMPUR, July 16 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) is expected to get the support of all 2,800 voters of Siamese origin in the Pendang Parliamentary constituency, come polling day on Thursday.

President of the Siamese Association of Malaysia Datuk Charern Intacat said he was confident of this based on the response from the community to the Barisan Nasional campaign.

He said the Siamese community's support for the BN was not something new as they had always believed that only the BN could ensure their wellbeing and that of the future generation.

To date all problems affecting the community such as kampung roads, land titles and help for Siamese Temples had been attended to satisfactorily, Chaerern Intacat said when contacted in Jitra today.

Recently, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain handed over aid totalling RM300,000 to the Siamese Temple in Kampung Titi Akar for the purpose of setting up a Siamese Language School.

At the function, the Chairman of the Pendang Siamese Community Coordinating Committee Chairman Edin Chok Edin Proot gave an assurance that the entire Siamese community in Pendang would support the BN which looked after the interests of all races including the Siamese in Malaysia.

Charern said in the last two or three days several ministers visiting Pendang had assured the Siamese community that any unresolved matters affecting the community would be resolved.

He said the Entrepreneur Development Ministry, for instance, had pledged to help members of the Siamese community to obtain Mara loans and more places for them in the Mara Junior Science Colleges as they were considered Bumiputeras.

Based on these pledges and past help, the Siamese community would definitely support the BN to repay all that it had done for the community.

Charern said another factor, which could not be disputed, was that the Siamese community loved Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and to return the many favours he had done for the community, they would surely vote BN.

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Of the 60,000 odd members of the Siamese community in Malaysia, nearly 50 per cent live in Kedah and 6,000 of them are in Pendang. Most of them are padi farmers and rubber tappers like the majority of the Malays there.

Meanwhile a prominent member of the Malaysia-Thailand Association, Boon Som Inong said the Siamese community had always supported the Barisan Nasional.

This was because they realised that only the BN was just and protected religious freedom and the practices of the various cultures.

He said even though Malaysia's official religion was Islam, the government was liberal to all races and allowed them to practise their own way of life.

Boon Som said the Siamese community in Malaysia held to the philosophy "Katan Yu Katakwehthi" that is remember the good done unto you and return the favour to them.

Meanwhile, Associate Professor Dr Proom Promwichit, a nuclear scientist with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), said the Siamese in Pendang were strong supporters of the BN and this had always been the case.

He said in the General Election of Nov 29, 1999, the Siamese community in Pendang was solidly behind the Barisan Nasional.

Dr Proom said the Siamese community like their Malay counterparts faced problems of poverty and they needed the Barisan Nasional Government to continue helping them.

He was confident that the BN Government would offer more places to Siamese students in government institutions of higher learning.

Malaysians of Siamese origin make up nine per cent of the 53,128 voters in Pendang. They live in Kampung Padang Pusing (about 400), Kampung Titi Akar (2,500), Kampung Paya Mak Inson (about 250), Kampung Padang Peliong (about 550), Kampung Cina (about 1,800) and Kampung Tok Set and Kampung Lampam (about 250 each).

-- BERNAMA

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