

'BN hits high scores each time constituencies are re-drawn'

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By Ram Anand

The ruling BN coalition scores comfortable victories in elections that take place right after the completion of a constituency redelineation process, says the Universiti Malaya Centre for Democracy and Elections (Umcedel).

NONEThe BN averages almost 60 percent of the popular vote right after every re-delineation exercise in Malaysian history, Umcedel deputy director Amer Saifude Ghazali (right) told a forum yesterday.

"Also, when we look at the law, the conditions for redelineation are very loosely termed. It does ask for a balanced representation of the electorate, while only making an exception for areas that are difficult to reach," Amer Saifude said.

As such, there are no clear guidelines or mapping to guide the redelineation process, which in turn causes the existence of oddly drawn-out state constituencies and parliamentary seats that often run in between other seats.

Amer was speaking at the Merdeka Centre's post- GE13 forum in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

NONEUniversiti Malaysia Sarawak's Dr Arnold Puyok (left), who also presented his findings, said the election results in Sabah showed the decline of "parochialism" in the voting trend of the Sabahans.

Puyok noted that with PKR winning seven state seats in Sabah, the electorate has rejected local-based opposition parties, such as Star.

"Maybe this represents the withering of the local-based 'Borneo agenda'. The people in Sabah voted for parties with a nationwide cause, rather than specific Sabah issues alone," he said.

However, Puyok noted that votes for the BN were below 50 percent in many seats, but it was still able to retain those seats because the opposition votes had been split between the state and federal opposition parties.

Expensive lesson for Pakatan

In a related development, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang said that BN had won 80

percent of Sabah's state legislative assembly seats despite only winning 55.78 percent of the popular vote.

On the other hand, Pakatan had polled 32.36 percent of the popular vote and won only 11 out of 60 seats (18.33 percent of total seats). Other opposition votes went to Sarawak Progressive Party (SAPP) and State Reform Party (Star).

Lim said this was an "expensive lesson" for the Sabah opposition because BN would have lost four more Parliamentary and eight state legislative assembly seats had the opposition vote not be split.

The four parliamentary constituencies are Keningau, Kota Marudu, Pensiangan and Tenom and the eight state assembly seats are Elopura, Melalap, Kundasang, Liawan, Paginatan, Kiulu, Nabawan and Tambunan.

The Sabah legislative assembly will meet on June 17 to 20 and it promises to be an interesting affair, now that the opposition has a bigger voice and that Jeffrey Gapari Kitingan has finally made a comeback.

Edwin Bosi, the state assemblyperson for Kepayan, will act as the DAP whip.

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