

BN's 'dishonourable' victory
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Soon Li Tsin

The Machap by-election results may have disappointed the DAP and its candidate but they are not totally demoralised because BN's victory was secured with dirty tricks.

"It's a flawed result marred by vote-buying, violence, intimidation and bribery. Although BN won, it was not an 'honest' victory," DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said.

Instead, the 9,623 registered Machap voters are the real victors as they have obtained tens of millions of ringgit in development projects from the BN, he told a press conference in Malacca today.

"This is a substantial achievement when we increased our votes at the expense of BN despite the many projects they had announced to gain support from the people," Lim said before listing down projects and allocations promised to Machap residents (chart).

Victory without honour

He cheekily lauded BN's tactics of fear, intimidation and vote buying by describing them as 'successful' especially in Tebong, one of the eight polling stations in Machap.

"Clearly BN's victory is without honour as they would still have won without having to resort to such dirty tactics," he said.

Yesterday, DAP lodged a police report - along with a set of incriminating photos - after they received information that voters were allegedly paid up to RM200 each at a BN operation room in Tebong.

Lim attributed DAP's loss to several factors including BN's use of government machinery to back Lai up and the fact polling day was a working day.

After nine days of intensive campaigning, BN candidate Lai Meng Chong, 56, defeated 33-year-old DAP candidate Liou Chen Kuang by a 4,081-vote majority.

This is 481 votes less than the majority achieved three years ago - the 2004 general election.

Lai secured 5,533 votes while Liou, who contested the seat for the second time, garnered 1,452 votes.

Lim who was kept busy in Machap throughout the campaign, expressed his disappointment when the final votes were tallied.

A moral victory

Met at the party's Machap Umboo office yesterday, Lim was kept on the phone for minutes and was pacing back and forth before settling down to comment on the results.

"DAP is of course disappointed with the results but yet heartened by the fact that we managed to increase our votes," he told malaysiakini.

This is the first time that the ruling coalition saw its majority being slashed in a by-election since its thumping victory in the 2004 general elections.

Despite the loss, Lim thanked the voters for giving the party a 'moral victory' and expressed hope for the party to soldier on.

"The fight for democracy goes on. We will continue to fight BN even though they have the EC and government machinery behind them.

"I believe the voters of Machap, by voting for us, have shown that they want democracy and that there must be an effective opposition," he said.

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