

BN was overconfident: Tun Dr Mahathir's ex-aide
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Former Kamunting assemblyperson Dr Abdul Malek Mohamed Hanafiah attributed Barisan Nasional's poor showing at yesterday's polls to 'overconfidence'. MCPX

"Barisan was overconfident and had taken things for granted," said Abdul Malek when met at the Taiping town hall while waiting for the election results to be announced last night.

Abdul Malek, who was formerly ex-premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad's political secretary, said Barisan grew overconfident as a result of their landslide win at the 2004 general election.

Taking the example of the Taiping parliamentary seat and the three state seats within the constituency, Abdul Malek said BN candidates for nearly all the four seats were decided at the eleventh hour.

m kayveas"They (BN) didn't bother to resolve the problem in Taiping. We didn't even have a proper Taiping Barisan chairperson. We couldn't meet and do anything.

"We couldn't even propose candidates properly. Too many issues have been swept under the carpet," he added.

There was a protracted tussle between Gerakan's Tan Lian Hoe and PPP's M Kayveas over who should be the Barisan Nasional Taiping division chairperson.

By tradition, the member of Parliament for the area, in this case Kayveas (pix), would be the Barisan division chair. However, because the seat was initially supposed to be contested by Gerakan this year, Tan, too, claimed the position.

Abdul Malek also said that economic problems had played a major role in precipitating the huge swing in votes against BN.

Economic problems

"The majority of voters are not bothered about foreign investment, economic corridors or the share market. They are worried about the money in their pocket.

"In Taiping, the economy is not progressing despite Barisan having held the seat for so many terms. What else can Barisan promise? We only keep saying we want to do something," added the two-term assemblyperson.

Meanwhile, Kayveas, who failed in his bid to defend the Taiping parliamentary seat, told reporters that he accepted the voters' decision and would continue to serve the Taiping constituency.

"I feel the voters want drastic change," said Kayveas.

samy vellu constipatedKayveas mooted that one way for BN to regain its former status was for all its component parties to merge into one entity.

"That way, all the component parties will be saved," he claimed.

Kayveas, who is PPP president, joins Gerakan acting-president Koh Tsu Koon and MIC president S Samy Vellu (left) as Barisan component party leaders who suffered humiliating defeats at the polls with their respective parties being nearly wiped out.

Kayveas lost to DAP's Nga Kor Ming by a margin of 11,298 votes - believed to be an opposition record for the seat.

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