

Muhyiddin worried, calls for swift changes
Malaysiakini.com
Aug 27, 2008

Barisan Nasional (BN) should not take lightly the victory of opposition stalwart Anwar Ibrahim in the Permatang Pauh by-election, said Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin. MCPX

The senior leader said he was concerned that the voters' decision to give victory to the opposition would become a trend.

umno retreat muhyiddin yassin pc 060608"Although it was just a by-election, it could be an indication of a trend that the voters had already decided that they wanted change even if they didn't know what the changes were, and refused to accept BN's leadership," Bernama quoted as telling Malaysian journalists in Singapore.

Muhyiddin, who is international trade and industry minister, was in the republic to attend the Asean Economic Ministers Meeting.

He said BN and Umno should conduct a post-mortem and take steps to speed up Umno's reinventing process as well as measures to rebrand the BN with new approach more acceptable to the people.

According to him, this would require the BN and Umno to re-evaluate whether their approach to campaign was already "stale and no longer acceptable to the people."

"It is clear that we need to make swift changes to the organisation and to the way we do things," he said.

Muhyiddin added that the results also showed that the voters' mindset had shifted and that they now wanted something which "are fairer, not racial-based (politics) but one that is based on the profile of the multiracial and multi-religious Malaysians."

"Umno should be prepared to make the change," he said.

They refused to believe

Muhyiddin said, however, that Anwar's victory was something to be expected and accepted as it was the wishes of the people, who made their choice under a democratic process.

anwar pc permatang pauh 02 260808"It may be that whatever is said about Anwar, the people and voters just refuse to believe it.

"The explanation given by our leaders was not accepted as though it was already decided from the outset that the BN would lose and PKR would win," he said.

Meanwhile, MCA secretary-general Ong Ka Chuan said all parties should accept Anwar's victory as it was the wishes of the people.

"We must respect the voters' decision and the country's democratic practices.

"Irrespective of the BN's view, we must accept the people's decision," he said.

Anwar won the by-election with a 15,671-vote majority after securing 31,195 votes, defeating BN candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah, who obtained 15,524 votes.

Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia candidate, Hanafi Mamat, lost his deposit after obtaining only 92 votes. There were 447 spoilt votes.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/88714>