

NEW STRAITS TIMES

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# March 8 — a day of reckoning for BN leaders

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**IPOH:** The election jigsaw puzzle here was solved well before the last result came in at 5am yesterday.

Pas, Parti Keadilan Rakyat and the DAP had taken control of the state with 31 state seats besides winning 11 parliamentary seats.

The Barisan Nasional had won 28 state seats.

The fact that the BN had won 13 parliamentary seats was no consolation to the loss of the reins of power in the state.

Worst of all was that the Barisan had lost the state after 11 successful outings.

March 8 was a day of reckoning that state BN leaders may never forget.

The losses were unimaginable: MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu lost in Sungai Siput, PPP president Datuk M. Kayveas in Taiping and National Unity deputy minister Datuk S. Veerasingam in Sungkai.

The DAP ended the day with 18 state and six parliamentary seats. Parti Keadilan Rakyat got seven state and three par-

liamentary seats while Pas has six state and two parliamentary seats.

In the 2004 election, the DAP managed to register wins in seven state and three parliamentary seats while PKR and Pas were wiped out.

As for the BN, all component parties suffered shocking defeats with the MCA, MIC, Gerakan and PPP being routed.

The MCA saw its share of 10 state and four parliamentary seats whittled down to one state seat and three parliamentary seats, with even party deputy Youth chief Datuk Ling Hee Leong being humbled by PKR's Dr Lee Boon Chye in Gopeng.

Its plans to wrest seats from the DAP in Kinta Valley turned into a nightmare instead, the only face-saving grace being the party's single victory in the Chenderiang seat.

The MIC's grand plan of introducing young blood and new faces in Perak also failed miserably with three of the four new candidates losing in their areas.

Only the party's information chief, Datuk M. Saravanan, survived in Tapah.

For Gerakan, it was a disastrous affair with all four state and two parliamentary candidates left out in the cold.

They were its Youth chief, Datuk Mah Siew Keong, in Teluk Intan and party vice-president Datuk Chang Ko Youn in Beruas.

PPP did equally poorly as the party lost both the Taiping parliamentary and Pasir Berdamar state seats.

Despite winning 27 seats, Umno could not muster sufficient support from its partners to continue to be in power.

The party, too, was not spared setbacks and losses in several of its traditional strongholds such as Lubuk Merbau and Changkat Jerbing.

In 2004, Umno won all the 34 state seats it contested.

Word on the ground has it that internal conflict and bickering over the choice of candidates contributed to the losses of several seats.