

Kit Siang praises Pak Lah, seeks government post for defeated rival Ghani
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By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, May 9 — DAP's Lim Kit Siang today praised former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, while also asking that his polls rival Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman be given a post in the new Barisan Nasional (BN) administration.

Lim described Abdullah's statement yesterday as being the "most sensible, level-headed and statesmanlike" comment on the results of last Sunday's polls.

He was referring to Abdullah's reported call for a halt to all attempts to racialise the polls results by blaming a particular community for BN's weaker parliamentary majority, where the former national leader was yesterday quoted saying: "This is unfair and unhelpful".

Despite holding on to power with its win of 133 federal seats, BN lost the popular vote and had a poorer showing this time round, which led the current Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to suggest that it was due to a "Chinese tsunami".

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was Abdullah's predecessor, later said he was shocked at BN's poor performance in Election 2013, laying the blame on "ungrateful" Chinese and "greedy" Malay voters.

Lim then accused Najib, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Dr Mahathir of making such "unfair and unhelpful" statements, saying that they must apologise for their "irresponsible" statements.

Analysts and opposition leaders have disagreed with Najib's reading of the election results, pointing out that PR had won the popular vote by a significant 51.4 per cent to BN's 48.6 per cent.

They said that this showed that it had not merely been a "Chinese tsunami" that caused BN to bleed seats as there was a massive swing in the urban and middle-class electorate towards the federal opposition.

The DAP advisor also said Ghani was a moderate and rational man, saying that the former Johor Mentri Besar had contributed to the state and country's development during his four terms of service.

"And I think it'll be a shame that those who got him fielded in Gelang Patah in order to see the end of Ghani Othman have their way.

"I think it's only just and fair for Ghani Othman to be appointed to an important post in the new government..." Lim said.

The 72-year-old Lim had contested against 66-year-old Abdul Ghani for the Gelang Patah federal seat, emerging a victor in the MCA stronghold when he defeated the latter by 14,762 votes.

During Abdul Ghani's 18-year service as the Johor Mentri Besar, the Iskandar Malaysia economic corridor was introduced in the state's southern region, successfully bringing in

RM103 billion in investments and creating 554,000 job opportunities in just a few years' time.

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