

Loyal Supporters, Commitment of Election Machinery Contribute to BN's Win in Teluk Intan

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TELUK INTAN, June 1 (Bernama) -- Barisan Nasional's (BN) victory in the Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election proved that its candidate, Datuk Mah Siew Keong, still had the support of local voters, compared with DAP which relied on outside voters.

This was evident when Mah was still able to garner almost the same number of votes this time around with that in the 13th general election, although the voter turnout saw a drop of 8,000 people.

In the last general election, Mah obtained 20,086 votes, and in yesterday's by-election he was able to secure 20,157 votes, hence defeating DAP candidate Dyana Sofea Mohd Daud with a 283 majority votes.

Political analyst Md Shukri Shuib, when contacted by Bernama, said yesterday's result showed that the support for BN among the constituents had not budged, although the overall voter turnout showed a drop from that of the 13th general election.

"For this, we can praise the BN election machinery, the leaders and members, as well as the party canvassers in Teluk Intan," he added.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, in his speech at the party's operation centre after the result was announced yesterday, admitted that the low voter turnout was among the reasons for DAP's loss in the by-election.

On the loyalty of BN supporters, Md Shukri, a lecturer at the School of Politics and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), said it could be due to their confidence in Mah, who used to be their member of parliament.

Md Shukri's views was shared by another political analyst, Associate Professor Dr Sivamurugan Pandian, who believed that Mah's track record in Teluk Intan and also at the cabinet level, as well as his good relations with the locals were also contributing factors.

He also said BN's strategy, among others, in introducing a manifesto, which suit the local needs, also played a role in making the voters to opt for the coalition.

"The promises, like upgrading their standard of economy, tourism, building a university, these are what the locals, who have been staying there for so long, want," he added.

On what the BN needed to focus on to retain the seat in the next general election, Dr Sivamurugan said the coalition had to move as one party, instead of as component members of the coalition.

"Mah's main challenge now is to fulfill the manifesto and his responsibility as an elected representative.

"He should interact and get close to the young people so that they do not see only the party factor, but to make an overall evaluation," he added.

Deputy head of the National Council of Professors' Political, Security and International Affairs Cluster Prof Dr Jayum Jawan, said BN should not be contend with its win in yesterday's Teluk Intan by-election, reminding the coalition of the huge challenge awaiting it in the 14th general election.

This, he said, was because BN won the Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election only with a slim majority.

"It is true BN won, but the voter turnout was low. This does not give the indication that it can win in the next general election, although the win does give the dose needed for it to continue to work towards getting a bigger majority," he added.

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