

Perlis BN blames outstation voters for Arau loss

KANGAR: The Perlis Barisan Nasional is now claiming that the presence of 2,000 outstation voters was among the reasons for its failure to retain its Arau parliamentary seat in last week's by-election.

State Barisan chief Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said these voters were formerly living in Arau but had moved to other states.

"Many new faces who were strangers to the locals were seen voting in the by-election. We suspect this was among the main causes for the Barisan's defeat," he said.

He said this was the preliminary findings of a post-mortem on the by-election defeat.

Other factors, such as the lack of Barisan election posters, lack of transportation on election day to ferry voters, and less vigorous campaigning, were not valid reasons for the drastic failure, he said.

PAS candidate Hashim Jasin polled 12,864 votes against Barisan's Ismail Kassim who obtained 11,541 on July 4.

Speaking to reporters after handing over permits to 198 orchard farmers who had opened up fruit orchards in Bukit Bintang forest reserve, near here, yesterday, Shahidan said fence-sitters had also greatly contributed to the Barisan's defeat.

In **Malacca**, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said lack of dedication had been identified as one of the reasons for the defeat.

"Umno thought it was bound to win and there was no need to work hard," Dr Mahathir told reporters after a closed-door meeting with the Malacca Umno liaison committee.