

**Uphill battle for PKR at Ijok**  
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I refer to the malaysiakini report Ijok: PKR to field Khalid. While it is good for PKR to have a heavyweight as a candidate to face of BN candidate, it will be an uphill battle for the opposition party to win this by-election as shown in the recent Machap by-election.

We must understand the mentality of the rural voters who will only vote for candidates that can bring goodies to their area. The present regime, with all the government machinery at their disposal plus government funds (read taxpayers money) will spend and spend to win the hearts and minds of the local people. The opposition parties cannot match this in kind.

The rural people do not care about corruption, abuse of power or price increases for foodstuffs, food and transport as their pockets are not affected as much as urban folk. That is why in every general election, the ruling parties win big in rural areas as compared to urban areas.

Anwar Ibrahim, for all his oratory skill which can mesmerise the crowds, cannot translate crowd attendance into votes as previous by-elections have shown. Even his allegations of a senior minister being involved in kickbacks in a submarine deal and the murder of a Mongolian beauty have failed to move the public to question our top guns lack of virtues in running our country.

However, we cannot give the present regime a free run in the Ijok by-election and knowing that local MIC leaders have protested against their president's choice of candidate, a swing of voters to PKR cannot be ruled out.

We, the public, should now be prepared to see waves of propaganda after propaganda by the mainstream media singing prettily of the virtues of the present government while heaping scorn on the opposition candidate.

Ijok's folks, like their Machap counterparts, will see roads being tarred, drains being straightened and other amenities being provided to them in exchange for their votes. To help them along, all the big shots of the government will be on the ground each to help boost the BN candidate.

It is a time-tested method of BN to splash money during any general election or by-election to win and as long as our voters don't have the vision to question this malpractice, it will continue. I'm afraid the opposition's chances of forming the government in the next general election is only a dream.

As long as the rural people are contented with their lot and are not as politically savvy as compared to their urban cousins, it will be a miracle for the opposition to win in the Ijok by-election.

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