

Johor MB: Extremism is why you shouldn't back PAS
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Extremism. The Islamic state. These are the reasons for Johor Menteri Besar Abdul Ghani Othman's appeal to the non-Malay voters of Tenang not to support PAS in the Jan 30 by-election.

Joining in the MCA's traditional clarion call on why-PAS-is-bad-for-you, Ghani (right) said a vote for BN is a vote for moderation.

"If PAS comes to power, it will not be satisfied with being second- or third-in-command. PAS will definitely want to have the prime minister's post or be the most powerful party," the Johor Umno chairperson added, and went on to raise Islamic state bogey lest PAS came to power.

PAS' call for an Islamic state has long been an MCA message in diverting Chinese support away from the opposition. However, Umno has traditionally stayed away from the topic, until now.

"So what will happen when PAS comes to power? PAS has already come to the Felda areas, saying it wants to establish an Islamic state.

"They say they want laws that will get your hands chopped off for stealing. That is the content of their campaign with the Malays in Chemplak in Tenang," he said.

Chemplak is one of the three Felda settlements in the Tenang state constituency. The others are Felda Tenang and Felda Chemplak Barat.

Ghani did not let up when speaking to a predominantly Chinese crowd of 300 at Tenang Station, labelling the Islamist party "extremist". He also implied that the other Pakatan Rakyat parties were losing their say on the issue.

"When PAS speaks about it (DAP leader) Lim Kit Siang and (PKR de facto leader) Anwar Ibrahim will tell them to stop it. But their talk of the Islamic state is already making its rounds in Felda Tenang and Felda Chemplak.

"And PAS is now ecstatic that Chinese voters are supporting it.

"Our country is now peaceful because we are moderate, so are our government policies. If we give PAS a seat, it is no moderate ... they are extremists," he said.

'2008 political tsunami a divisive tactic'

At another function later, Ghani played down the 2008 general election results, which many have termed a 'political tsunami'.

"In 2008, a lot of things happened. I hope you know that they were all negative influences, because what happened then was the Pakatan Rakyat tactic to divide the people.

"They want to make the Indians unhappy and dissatisfied with the government. If that is the way they intend to rule the country, everything will turn to ruins," he said at a Thaipusam function at the Sri Subramaniam temple in Tenang last night.

The 2008 general election saw BN lose its two-thirds majority in Parliament for the first time since 1969, while five states fell to Pakatan rule.

Many BN leaders, including Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, have since appeared to be humbled by this "signal" from the voters.

Non-Malay voters make up more than 52 percent of the electorate in Tenang, with 39 percent of them Chinese and 12 percent Indians.

Tomorrow is nomination for Tenang - the 14th by-election since the general election - with voters going to the polls on Jan 30, a Sunday.

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