

Poll: BN has edge over Pakatan for youth votes
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The BN has a three percent advantage over Pakatan Rakyat in the battle for youth votes, according to independent research group Zentrum Future Studies founder Abu Hassan Hasbullah.

At a forum titled '13th General Election: BN or Pakatan Rakyat' in Kota Baru last night, Abu Hassan said Zentrum's preliminary findings showed the bulk of Pakatan's youth votes come from the Chinese community.

"Of 68 percent of the young voters in the electoral roll, 88 to 92 percent of Chinese youths are pro-Pakatan," he said.

Speaking on the sidelines of the forum later, Abu Hassan said this was equally reflected in terms of overall voters.

"The support of Chinese voters, irrespective of gender and age, for Pakatan Rakyat is estimated at between 82 to 88 percent.

"For Malay voters, it remains stagnated at between 22 percent to 28 percent, bringing the total to a three to five percent advantage for the BN."

However, Abu Hassan (left in photo) warned that the razor thin advantage could easily diminish in the run up to the general election.

"Malay youth voters are more defensive and cautious, they prefer to observe (first)..."

"But the sentiment will change two to three weeks before the general election, particularly from national issues, for example the National Feedlot Corporation issue. It gives a huge impact, particularly among the Malay community."

This, Abu Hassan said, meant that Pakatan may manage a eleventh hour swing among Malay voters.

He declined to disclose further details as the research was yet to be published.

'Youth votes unpredictable'

Echoing this was forum moderator and political scientist Mohammad Agus Yusoff, who said despite the numbers, the youth vote was difficult to predict.

"About 60 percent of them are fence sitters, they will act at the last minute based on current issues, especially issues related to their welfare, such as the state of the economy, cost of living and job opportunities," he said.

Asked to comment on the findings, PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution, (right) another speaker at forum, said his party was open to such results and was prepared to use them as a reference for its general election preparations.

"We will take it as a challenge for us to improve. We do not reject it completely, we don't practise the denial syndrome," he said.

The Machang MP added that PKR similarly does not take things for granted when presented with favourable surveys.

"I read all research results, but most important is the audit system of our election committee, because it gives the real picture of the state of the party, its problems and chances in the next general election.

"But we do not publish that, we discuss it internally," Saifuddin said.

Also present at the forum was Deputy Higher Education Minister Saifuddin Abdullah and UKM lecturer Samsul Adabi Mamat.

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