

Candidate: 'Babi' posters will get PAS sympathy votes

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By Susan Loone

PENANG PAS candidate for the Kepala Batas parliamentary Afnan Hamimi Taib Azamudden is unfazed about posters of him being defaced with the word 'babi' (pig), saying it might even help him gain some sympathy votes.

For Muslims, it is haram (illegal) to eat or touch pork, and labelling them as such is deemed insulting.

However, Afnan (right), who is state PAS Youth secretary, did not express any anger when he found out about the matter.

"This kind of politics is outdated. It may even increase my popularity. These are tactics people can no longer accept," said Afnan when met after a ceramah by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang in Penaga last night.

The large poster of Afnan with the derogatory word splashed in red paint had been put up near the Bertam exit toll booth.

His comrade, Penaga candidate Roshidi Hussein, said such acts by certain quarters were indeed counter-productive.

"A man stopped me while I was in my car and told me how mad he was at the poster defacement. He told me he used to be an Umno man but now wants to show his dissatisfaction by voting for PAS," said the Penang PAS deputy commissioner.

"In fact it had been a bonus for us. We will be able to get some sympathy votes out of this."

Roshidi, a lawyer by profession, will be contesting against Umno's Mohd Zain Ahmad, who replaces outgoing state opposition leader Azhar Ibrahim.

Both candidates were rather satisfied with their party's campaigning thus far and said they stood a better chance at winning their seats from their Umno opponents.

Afnan is facing a tough battle in Kepala Batas against BN Youth information chief Reezal Merican Naina Merican (right), who replaces incumbent and former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah, or better known as Pak Lah, has been campaigning alongside Reezal but it is uncertain how the Kepala Batas electorate would respond to an outsider as they have thrown their support behind the former since 1978.

Umno's infighting may influence polls outcome

Umno's infighting in several constituencies due to preferred candidates being dropped from the BN list like Tasek Gelugor, Sungai Dua and Seberang Jaya may have an influence on the outcome of the election in the Malay heartland on polling day, May 5.

"The Kepala Batas voters have always voted for a religious person," said Afnan, without running down his opponent, but adding that based on their voting pattern, he stands a good chance at achieving victory.

"In 2008, there were areas we were not able to enter to campaign where the sentiment towards Umno was very strong, and sometimes we were scolded or asked to leave," he said.

"But now, the situation has changed. Even though they may still express or indicate support for Umno, we are welcomed," he added.

Roshidi explained that the situation may have changed due to the increase in young voters in the constituency.

There are 51,743 votes in Kepala Batas and 43 percent of that are youths below 40 years, with 76 percent Malays, Chinese 19 percent and Indians 4 percent.

"We know the tide is changing because many have approached us to be our election workers and polling agents. BN pay their workers and we do not. So we know their support for us is genuine."

On Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's visit to Penaga on Tuesday, Roshidi said, "We welcomed him. He would help us win some support."

Najib became prime minister in 2009, taking over from Abdullah who had to step down when the BN lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament in 2008.

