

## **Pakatan sure of five seats in Sarawak**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**May 4, 2013**

**By Kow Gah Chie**

GE13 WATCH SARAWAK With a few hours left to polling day, Pakatan Rakyat is confident of grabbing five seats with the help of Chinese voters, and has great hopes for another five marginal seats in Sarawak.

It's said Pakatan needs to win 10 seats here in order to take Putrajaya.

But it's still hard to grasp the latest sentiments on the ground, especially in the Dayak seats, due to the logistics and communication factors - one seat is as big as Pahang state!

azlanThe seats which Pakatan is confident of taking are Bandar Kuching, Stampin, Miri, Sarikei and Lanang, where it had a breakthrough in the 2011 state election.

The marginal seats include Sibü, Saratok, Baram, Hulu Rajang and Limbang.

Pakatan won one seat - Bandar Kuching in the 2008 polls and grabbed Sibü in the 2010 by-election.

The issues of an Islamic state and hudud law harped on by BN, in particular, by the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) seems to have less impact on Chinese voters who are demanding change.

The Dayak majority and mixed seats- Saratok, Baram, Hulu Rajang and Limbang are no longer deemed as BN strongholds due to land grabs and construction of big dams which have created a lot of negative sentiment.

BN is using promises of development projects and cash as goodies to woo votes, despite the Dayak longhouse folk's growing acceptance of Pakatan.

This has been helped by accessibility to alternative information such as Radio Free Sarawak.

But it's still hard to tell if BN's strategy would have a fatal impact on Pakatan's chances in Putrajaya.

Seats to watch

Lubok Antu (P203)

Candidates: William@Nyallau Badak (BN), Larry Sng (SWP) and Nicholas Bawin Anggat (PKR)

bn candidates announcement pbb hq 030411 alfred jabuSWP is standing against Sarawak People's Party (PRS). Its president Larry Sng, a former state assistant minister, is considered winnable in Lubok Antu.

This has forced BN chairman Najib Abdul Razak to visit the place and emphasise that SWP is not a BN friendly party.

Following the visit, state deputy chief minister Alfred Jabu Numpang (left) announced a RM500 allocation for 5,931 families to fix their houses.

BN's William @ Nyallau Badak is the incumbent MP, who won by a slight majority of 1,610 votes in the last poll.

Saratok (P205)

Candidates: William Mawan Ikom (BN), Ali Biju (PKR), Abang Rosli Abang Paleng (Independent)

Mawan, the state senior minister and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party president who is based in Julau, is considered a stranger to the voters, despite being born locally.

He needs to tackle internal sabotage from incumbent MP Jelaing Mersat's faction, which is not happy that he was dropped.

Ali Biju has the advantage of being the state assembly person for Krian, one of the two state seats under Saratok, but he needs to gain more support of the 40% Malay votes which are a BN stronghold.

Saratok is a Dayak majority mixed seat of which 49% consists of a coastal constituency.

Sibu (P212)

Candidates: Vincent Lau (BN), Oscar Ling (DAP) and Narawi Haron (independent)

Traditionally a SUPP fortress, Sibu is the toughest Chinese majority seat for DAP to

defend, as the 2010 by-election victory was a narrow one due to the arrival of 200 problematic postal votes.

Moreover, BN gained a total majority of 719 votes in the three state seats under Sibü - Bawang Assan, Pelawan and Nangka - during the 2011 state election.

DAP has openly admitted it may lose if the turnout does not reach 75 percent.

Hulu Rajang (P216)

Candidates: Ugak Kumbong (BN), Abun Sui Anyit (PKR) and George Lagong (SWP)

This constituency suffered the impact of the construction of the Bakun Dam, Murum Dam and land grabs, and there is great dissatisfaction here.

The Hulu Rajang people have now placed PKR in a more advantageous situation.

Lagong, the Pelagus state assemblyperson, was the only independent candidate who won in the last state election, but he's now standing under a SWP ticket,

He is also a close relative of Sng, the SWP president.

Kumbong, a new face fielded by BN, will need to tackle the problem of BN's vote being possibly split by SWP, in order to defend the seat which his colleague Abit Joo won with a majority of 2,164 votes.

Baram (P220)

Candidates: Anyi Ngau (BN), Patrick Sibat Sujang (independent) and Roland Engan (PKR)

The proposed Baram dam construction which may displace 20,000 people, has angered the community who has called for the construction to be scrapped.

However, the people were threatened with the possibility of the construction of a new school being abandoned if the people choose not to vote for BN, as reported by The Borneo Post.

Limbang (P221)

Candidates: Hasbi Habibollah (BN), Baru Bian (PKR)

Limbang is a poorly developed township with no direct road access without passing through Brunei from Lawas.

Hudud forum Baru Bian This has lessened economic opportunities and activities. This was made an issue by locals.

Baru Bian who has been branded as anti-Malay, needs to fight a uphill battle to grab the Malay votes which consist of 35% of the total votes.

Although Hasbi Habibollah won with a slim majority of 676, BN bagged a total of 7,380 majority votes in both the Batu Kota and Batu Danau state seats in the 2011 state election.

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