

GST, not hudud impacted Pmtg Pauh polls

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It was the Goods and Services Tax (GST), not the polemics on hudud which played a role in the results of the Permatang Pauh by-election.

This was among the findings of two surveys conducted by Selangor government's think-tank Institut Darul Ehsan (IDE).

The first one was conducted before nominations day for the by-election between April 17 to April 19 and the second one on May 3.

Respondents were asked whether the implementation of the GST would lead to the support for Pakatan Rakyat.

In the initial survey, 64 percent of the 1,075 respondents polled said "yes", 33 percent said "no" while three percent were unsure.

The survey conducted on May 3, however, found more respondents replying with "yes" at 73 percent when posed with the same question.

IDE deputy chairperson Mohammad Redzuan Othman in a dialogue session at Universiti Selangor today said Permatang Pauh voters knew that the GST meant the prices of goods and services had risen and also equated it to the country's leaders living lavishly.

Hudud did not perturb the voters

The issue of hudud, on the other hand, did not perturb the voters.

"Forty-four percent said hudud was not an issue while 30 percent said yes, and 26 percent of respondents were unsure," he said.

Redzuan added that the polemics on hudud was instead played up by the media.

"The reality is, voters did not use the hudud issue to determine who they want to vote for," he said.

Thirty-three percent of Malay respondents in the poll said "yes" as opposed to the 48 percent who said "no" on whether hudud was an issue or otherwise.

What is more surprising is that only 16 percent of the Chinese respondents believed hudud was an issue while 40 percent said no.

Forty-two percent of Indian respondents replied with "yes", 5 percent replied "no" and the

rest were largely unsure.

When asked whether the Penang government had raised issues related to racial and religious tension, more than half of the respondents - at 59 percent – said 'no'.

Only 24 percent replied 'yes' while 17 percent of those surveyed were undecided on this matter.

Redzuan also noted that although the most effective mode of disseminating information was through the mainstream media - at 26 percent of the respondents following it - the Internet was very close behind at 24 percent.

"And PKR did not use this for their own benefit. Even though Pakatan Rakyat's candidate Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail had a blog, this was not used to spread campaign information," he said.

'Nenek kipas' jibe fell flat

When respondents were asked whether they had any problems with Wan Azizah as Pakatan's candidate for the by-election, 41 percent of the respondents said they had some reservations initially.

"When asked whether their reservations meant that they did not support Pakatan, they said it was not because they did not support Pakatan but rather because they had hoped for a younger candidate," said Redzuan.

Nevertheless, the second survey conducted found that the issue of Wan Azizah's (photo) suitability as the by-election candidate resolved.

"PKR managed to portray her as a mother who takes care of the people and one who is relaxed with posters of her with children and of activities conducted where she even rode a bicycle.

"This approach managed to change the perception from what had been portrayed by Umno, that she was merely a nenek kipas (grandmother with a fan).

"She managed to prove that she is active and can move with the rakyat," he said.

Although Wan Azizah won with a lower majority this time around, it is believed that this was largely due to a lower voter turnout as compared to the last general election.

Wan Azizah beat main contender, BN's Suhaimi Sabudin and two other independent candidates with a 8, 841-vote majority.

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