

Report: Muhyiddin more popular than Zahid

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Perikatan Nasional's (PN) Muhyiddin Yassin was the most popular among top party leaders, according to a September survey by pollster Merdeka Center.

According to report by Singapore's Straits Times, Merdeka Center found that 51 percent of respondents approved of Muhyiddin .

In contrast, only 13 percent approved of BN chairperson and Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi .

Caretaker prime minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob came in second at 46 percent, followed by PKR president Anwar Ibrahim (33 percent) and Umno deputy president Mohamad Hasan (32 percent).

In view of the survey results, the Straits Times report suggested that BN will likely continue to back Ismail Sabri as their candidate for prime minister.

“Still, backing Ismail Sabri to continue as premier - should BN triumph at the Nov

19 vote - appears to be the right strategic move, as his popularity far outstrips that of Zahid, who has been tarnished by dozens of graft charges,” said the newspaper.

Merdeka Center’s September findings - obtained just before Ismail Sabri dissolved Parliament on Oct 10 - have been presented to various financial institutions of late.

BN’s assumed dominance exaggerated

Meanwhile, Straits Times reported that Merdeka Center’s findings suggested that widely held assumptions of BN’s guaranteed victory during the upcoming general election were exaggerated.

The survey suggested that the government approval rating was only at 38 percent, lower than the 39 percent in April 2018, days before BN was defeated during the 2018 general election.

“Current satisfaction with the government is much lower than the 50 percent in September 2021, just weeks after Ismail Sabri first became premier, after the Pakatan Harapan and PN coalitions had in turn failed to cling on to a parliamentary majority.

“Even more ominous is the fact that 51 percent said they were dissatisfied with the government in September, compared to 47 percent just before Najib Abdul Razak, tainted by the billion-dollar 1MDB scandal, was deposed in May 2018,” said Straits Times.

Previously, the Straits Times reported that BN’s internal projections was it was capable of winning up to 80 seats - well below the 112 needed to form a government.

The same report suggested the prime minister’s office was projecting only 60 wins for BN.

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