

**Chinese voted against the gov't**  
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At a glance, the two Chinese-dominant polling districts in Ijok - Berjuntai Bestari Selatan and Pekan Ijok - have voted against the ruling party in unison.

Do the results of the by-election indicate that the Indians have chosen to remain as hardcore MIC supporters, while the Malays, even in PAS/PKR strongholds, have all taken in to money politics? Notably, the initial resistance from the Kuala Selangor Umno division against an Indian candidate had visibly vapourised as money poured in by the millions in the constituency that was bypassed in development over the last few decades.

One thing appears to be indisputable: the Chinese are voting against the government.

The anti-government sentiments among the Chinese constituents reflected in the Ijok by-election results will pose a major headache for MCA leaders, who have to answer to their BN bosses. Despite the RM36 million by-election goodies thrown in, why the inconsistency in the Chinese community's voting pattern just within two weeks after a walkover victory in Machap?

In contrast, Gerakan can take it a little easy as it has chosen a multiracial stance in its political philosophy, and secondly, it has little impact in Ijok with its marginal political presence at the local level. The fact that Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon had to adjourn to MCA's operations room to greet the prime minister during his 11th-hour visit to Ijok speaks volume of realpolitik on the the ground.

Suffice to say, if Ijok is a win for Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, it then must be an equally big headache for him to fathom why Ijok's Chinese voters revolted so angrily against his administration? Is this a single swallow that makes a spring about the disquiet among the Chinese constituents? God knows.

In reality, the Chinese community in Ijok makes no distinction between having an Indian or a Malay as their elected representative if race-based politics were allowed to supersede all else. That stark reality had helped them cast vote to truly reflect their inner voices on how the country is being run.

When you play divide-and-rule, race-based politics, the keris cuts both ways. Whether Najib Abdul Razak or Anwar Ibrahim was the bigger devil that caused the 1987 racial tension over Chinese education issues that later developed into Operasi Lalang - a corpse raised incessantly towards the last laps of campaigning in Ijok by no less a personality than Najib and MCA leaders, and rebutted by DAP and PKR - was evidently no longer relevant to the realpolitik faced by the voters.

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