

Survey: Pakatan has little prospect in S'wak
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A mere 11.2 percent of Sarawakians are willing to vote for the opposition, according to a survey by independent pollsters Merdeka Centre in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).

This may dismiss belief that the recent Sibü by-election, which saw a surprise win by opposition DAP, was a precursor for more BN defeats in the upcoming state elections which must be called before mid-2011.

The survey of 518 Sarawakians - comprising of respondents reflecting the state ethnic makeup - showed that 64.1 percent of respondents were willing to vote BN, which is an 1.1 percent more than the popular vote received by the coalition during the 2006 state elections.

NONEThough the opposition Pakatan Rakyat coalition's figurehead Anwar Ibrahim (right) may be a top draw in the peninsula, the survey results suggest he wields little influence in Sarawak, with only 21.1 percent of respondents endorsing his leadership.

Moreover, there appears to be a general negative impression of the opposition, with most citing a lack of unity (33.6 percent), followed by lack of ideas on economic development (26.6), corruption (11.4), weak administration (7.5) and weak leadership (4.8).

Meanwhile, the survey saw between 70 to 80 percent having a positive perception towards BN's policies and actions, albeit recognising that it has weaknesses, which include poor leadership, intra-party rivalry and money politics.

20% swing needed for Pakatan win

However, the surveyors noted that it was possible that Pakatan could pull an upset, provided that it manages a massive 20 percent swing in the popular votes which would result in 30 more seats to the current six.

A possible opposition swing could be fueled by an increasing popularity of the alternative media and increasing distrust towards BN, with a third of respondents believing that government programs only benefit the rich and half believing that government aid never reaches the needy.

azlanAnother possible problem for BN was the significant number of respondents who are seeking myriad changes such as increased levels of democracy (31.5 percent), less graft (21), a better education system (19.5), high income levels (18) and lower crime rates (14.9).

As proven during the Sibü by-election, the opposition can count on the support of the Chinese voters, as 36 percent of Chinese respondents said they were willing to lend them support.

However, 33.3 percent of Chinese voters identified themselves as fence-sitters.

On the economy, 45 percent of respondents are not satisfied with the economy but 59 percent are optimistic with the future outlook of the economy, while 65 percent feel secure

of their jobs.

Similar to earlier survey results in Peninsula Malaysia, Chinese Sarawakians are the least optimistic about the economy while Muslim bumiputras are the most optimistic.

BN will win next 2-3 state polls

Speaking to reporters at briefing on the survey results, Unimas lecturer Dr Faisal S Hazis believe that the BN will win the upcoming state polls hands down.

"I expect BN to be strong for another two to three elections, but the campaigning will be feisty," he said.

Elaborating, Faisal said opposition coalition face a complicated scenerio where Dayak professionals were sympathetic towards PKR but to a much lesser extent favours the Chinese-dominated DAP.

"Racial politics is not played up in Sarawak with all four BN component parties being multi-racial, but there are elements of racial politics imported from the peninsula," he said.

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