

SAPP coup possible in Batu Sapi
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SAPP's chances appear to be on an uptrend in the Batu Sapi by-election, as early predictions lean towards a possible coup.

The reading is that SAPP's president and Batu Sapi candidate Yong Teck Lee is benefitting from a lack of challenge from rivals Ansari Abdullah (PKR) and Linda Tsen Thau Lin (BN).

SAPP, that is working hard to steal a chunk of bumiputera votes from the BN, is seen as having a strong footing among the Chinese who make up a sizeable minority at nearly 40 percent of the 25,582 registered voters in Batu Sapi.

azlanBN's Tsen, the widow of Edmund Chong Ket Wah who held the seat until his fatal motorcycle accident three weeks ago, however, has the support of the mighty BN election machinery, and Umno that commands strong support from the majority bumiputera Muslim voters.

It is, however, not these two who provide the intrigue but PKR, that despite having the weakest campaign machinery of the three, is poised to dictate the outcome of the Nov 4 polls.

For despite Ansari's sluggish campaign beginnings, the opposition coalition's assault is expected to pick up pace with the influx of national Pakatan leaders hitting the campaign trail over the next few days.

Among the key leaders already in Batu Sapi are Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim and 'Sibu miracle' MP Wong Ho Leng, who are expected to give Chinese voters something to think about, while PAS leaders Mahfuz Omar and Mohamad Sabu is hoping to sway the bumiputera Muslim sentiments.

Pakatan de facto chief Anwar Ibrahim also arrived yesterday night to lend his star power, and is expected to join DAP advisor Lim Kit Siang for a ceramah later tonight.

PKR possible kingmakers

As it stands, the opposition can hope for at least 5,771 votes, based on the outcome of the last contest in Batu Sapi.

NONEIn that contest during the March 2008 general election, the late incumbent Chong defended the seat with 9,479 votes in a straight fight with independent candidate Chong Kwong Wing, who earned a respectable 5,771 votes.

The impressive number of votes garnered by the challenger despite lacking in campaign machinery as an independent candidate, indicates that there is a sizeable pool of hardcore opposition supporters in the parliamentary constituency.

Assuming the same voter turnout and that the opposition will retain the support of the anti-establishment vote, it follows that SAPP's chances depend highly on how well it competes with PKR.

Another factor will be how successful both opposition parties are at hacking away at BN's majority.

Should the pro-opposition voters be split 70-30 between SAPP and PKR, that would translate to 4,040 and 1,731 votes respectively.

From there, the opposition needs to collectively steal 40 percent of the BN's 9,479 votes if SAPP hopes to have a shot at winning this contest.

That is, if both SAPP and PKR can snag 20 percent each (1,898 votes), it should give Yong a victory as his final tally would be 5,938 votes, ahead of BN's 5,687 and PKR's 3,629.

PKR chances slim

This scenario however does not guarantee Yong a win, as it depends entirely on the split in support between the two opposition parties.

Anything under 20 percent for SAPP would mean the opposition effectively hands victory over to the BN on a silver platter.

Looking at voter demographics, SAPP will benefit from PKR making inroads into pro-BN bumiputera voters, while BN stands to gain if PKR whittles away at Chinese support for SAPP.

Ultimately, while PKR's chances of winning look slim, they remain an important force in determining the final outcome in Batu Sapi.

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