

Super Sunday: Hakka 'mui' vs Hakka 'taiko'
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The battle for the 9,737 Chinese votes or 38.06 per cent of the 25,582 voters in the Batu Sapi by election on Nov 4, reached fever-pitch today as the three candidates went all out to woo the voters.

Dubbed 'Battle of Super Sunday', the candidates took advantage of the weekend rest day to reach out to as many voters as possible, particularly in the highly Chinese concentrated area.

The Chinese in the constituency basically come from dialect groups such as Hakka, Cantonese and Hokkien.

NONThe Hokkien is largely concentrated in the Karamunting area, Cantonese in Bandar Ramai-ramai, Kampung Pukat, Bandar Leila and Bandar Nam Tung while the Hakka are concentrated in Taman Mawar.

BN's Linda Tsen Thau Lin (right), Sabah opposition-based SAPP president Yong Teck Lee and PKR's Ansari Abdullah are the candidates in this by-election.

Yong and Tsen come from the Hakka clan and this explains why some have dubbed his by-election as the battle between 'Hakka Mui' and 'Hakka Taiko'.

Mui' means sister while 'Taiko' means big brother in Chinese.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the candidates and their campaigners stumble on each other's path in their respective campaign trails as they have packed schedules targeting similar housing areas and markets.

Apart from that, there is luncheon gathering and dinner with the Chinese community in the town.

On one occasion, Yong came across MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek in Taman Mawar, a highly-concentrated Hakka area, this morning as the BN stepped up its campaign in the Chinese and bumiputera areas.

Later, Tsen, accompanied by Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, also visited the same area.

Final phase

As the campaign entered its final phase, talks have emerged that there is an 'understanding' between SAPP and PKR that both opposition parties would concentrate on different locations where SAPP would focus on Chinese areas while PKR and the opposition pact 'Pakatan Rakyat', on Bumiputera-dominated areas.

Political pundits believe PKR has been concentrating on the bumiputera areas to split the votes, as well as that it was part of its strategy to contest the Sekong state seat in the next general election, and at the same time, allow SAPP to concentrate on the Chinese areas,

particularly the Karamunting state seat.

Both Sekong and Karamunting state seats are within the Batu Sapi parliamentary constituency.

NONEHowever, such notion has been dismissed by both parties with SAPP saying that the party had been campaigning in the bumiputera areas, including the surrounding islands, for the past few days.

PKR, on the other hand, has also roped in its national leaders such as DAP veteran leader Lim Kit Siang (left) and newly-elected Sibuan Member of Parliament Richard Wong Ho Leng to campaign for PKR candidate Ansari in the Chinese areas.

This effort is likely to split the Chinese voters into three groups. The question remains: How many votes can SAPP and BN garner as they strive to increase their support among the Chinese voters?

In the March 2008 general election, the late Chong retained the seat with 9,479 votes in a straight fight with independent candidate Dr Chung Kwong Wing who obtained 5,771 votes.

Despite the BN target of obtaining at least 25 per cent of the Chinese votes due to the sizeable pool of hardcore opposition supporters in the constituency, the BN candidate can still pull it through with higher bumiputera votes while PKR can gain substantial votes from the Chinese voters.

- Bernama

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