

BN unleashes banner slander on YTL
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The Batu Sapi campaign dynamics takes a turn again as BN launches an all-out banner war against SAPP candidate Yong Teck Lee to try to stem the tide of Chinese support going his way.

The BN's publicity machinery has plastered the town, in particular Chinese-majority areas, with countless banners in Chinese attacking Yong's credibility by indirectly calling him "evil" and a two-faced "politikus", a play on the Malay word for 'rat'.

NONEA couple of banners also touched on the Saham Amanah Sabah (SAS) scandal that plagued Yong's tenure as Sabah chief minister from 1997 to 1998.

One reads, "Because the mandate was given to a politikus, the people's trust fund has 'returned to Holland'" (right), employing a Chinese metaphor to mean the money is long gone.

Another goes, "You cheat your way towards Sabah autonomy, so that you can do evil again", while yet another, "When you enter BN on your knees, you say BN is good, but when you quit BN, it is bad".

The SAPP president however anticipated the attack, making sure a few days ago to blame Umno for the SAS debacle where the trust fund value plunged from RM1 per share to as low as RM0.17 each, causing local investors losses in millions of ringgit.

NONEThe former BN party is sticking close to their 'Sabah for Sabahans' and Sabah autonomy slogans, putting up hand-painted banners that accused the federal government of misdeeds against the Borneo state.

One banner reads, "No matter big or small, things have to be approved by KL. How much dignity has Sabah left?", while another accuses Umno of talking all of Sabah's petroleum, leaving the state as the poorest in Malaysia.

PKR miracle or sacrifice?

PKR meanwhile are confident that they have a foot in the race with the majority bumiputera Muslim voter base, traditionally a BN goldmine for support.

NONEDespite a relatively modest print campaign compared to their opponents', with only PKR flags and posters of their candidate Ansari Abdullah, the Pakatan Rakyat is optimistic of gaining support from both the Chinese and bumiputera Muslims.

PKR election director Fuziah Salleh told Malaysiakini that PKR is enjoying increased Chinese support in Batu Sapi.

Rather than jump into the banner slander war, she said they are instead launching a publicity campaign targeted at bumiputeras to convince them that they have nothing to lose in voting for the opposition, since they have gained little from having supported BN for so long.

To reach out to more Chinese voters, Pakatan has run full page advertisements in local Chinese dailies listing their many achievements in the states taken by the coalition in the watershed March 2008 general election.

A PKR source however admitted that they are still open to working with SAPP to take down their common enemy, if SAPP manages to sweep the Chinese votes that make up nearly 40 percent of the electorate.

"If we find that SAPP controls most of the Chinese voters, we will consider giving up on the battle and instead concentrate our efforts on getting more BN bumiputera voters to help Yong Teck Lee win, because our main target is BN.

"But if we find that we are gaining Chinese votes, we will go all out in that segment and hopefully achieve a miracle in Batu Sapi," the source said.

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