

Goodies on both sides of South China Sea
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'Tis is the season of by-election and one thing that is almost as sure as death and taxes during the polls are a plethora of goodies from both sides of the political divide to shore up support.

And since there are two by-elections taking place concurrently for the Batu Sapi parliamentary seat and the Galas state seat, federal ministers and politicians are flying back and forth over the South China Sea to deliver promises and "sweeteners".

Although allegations have been flying all over the place in the past 10 days of campaigning over vote-buying which includes the giving out of hampers and duit minyak (transport allowance), it is certain that when goodies are being given out, both sides will spare no change.

azlanIn a vast contrast to the Hulu Selangor by-election back in April when the PKR-led state government was dishing out land titles and local council allocations into the semi-rural constituency, the PAS-led Kelantan state government could not be any more different.

Although the PAS spiritual adviser and Kelantan MB Nik Aziz Nik Mat has had to face bribery claims when he gave out duit zakat (alms) to several Orang Asli converts, the state government had earlier rolled into the rural constituency giving land titles, something which they claimed have been long overdue.

And apart from the RM250 "transportation allowance" for the outstation voters, there was nothing much that the state government could afford to dish out.

There was also practically nothing that PKR could do in the goodies department in their campaign through their candidate Ansari Abdullah, who is also a lawyer.

batu sapi 301010 pkr repairs bridge at kg gasAfter a spate of rotten luck where he fell into the sea twice in three days, the first time from a collapsed jetty and the second time from a wobbly bridge, PKR had repaired the walkway in Kampung Gas from where he fell for the second time. The jetty, however, was repaired by BN campaigners.

There were also no reports of the traditional hampers and sundry goods given out by PKR as well as SAPP in the three-cornered fights.

BN steamrolls campaign with goodies

As different as day and night, the BN campaign was a stark contrast to their competitors in giving out goodies.

azlanEven before campaigning began, Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin descended into Galas with his entourage, announcing a whopping RM180 million for the first ever People's Housing Project in Kelantan, comprising 1,500 flat units mainly for the poor.

Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman was not too shabby either, presenting aid of RM1.6 million for Chinese schools as well as RM2.54 million for non-Muslim religious bodies in the Batu Sapi parliamentary seat where non-Muslims make up close to 40 percent of the electorate.

Attempting to shine the spotlight on the PBS candidate Linda Tsen, the state and federal government did not hold back in splurging allocations by the millions in Batu Sapi, where a large chunk of the voters still live in abject poverty.

From promises of new schools to village aid to road upgrading projects, the goodies from BN seem to get bigger and bigger in the countdown to polling day.

While these tactics may work in Batu Sapi where it is said that the constituency is as good as a "fixed deposit" seat for BN, the same can't be said about the Galas voters.

There is an old saying about Kelantan voters - who are still very much in awe of Nik Aziz - they may take the money, but not necessarily vote in the giver's favour.

The battle for Galas sees a straight fight between Umno's Abdul Aziz Yusof and PAS' Dr Zulkefli Mohamad. The Batu Sapi by-election however is a three-cornered fight between Tsen, Ansari and SAPP's Yong Teck Lee.

Both constituencies go to polls today.

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