

# BN wins convincingly, opposition loses deposit

BATU  
TALAM  
BY-ELECTION

■ By V. Vasudevan and  
M. Hamzah Jamaludin  
*news@nst.com.my*

**RAUB:** The Barisan Nasional retained the Batu Talam state seat with a majority of 5,857 votes, more than double the margin in the last general election.

Despite the initial fear of a very low voter turnout, the 68 per cent or 7,131 voters who turned up yesterday made their choice to pick BN candidate Abdul Aziz Mat Kiram as their representative.

Abdul Aziz polled 6,276 votes while independent Ng Chee Pang managed to scrape together only 419 votes, losing his deposit.

To get back the deposit, a candidate must obtain not less than one eighth or 12.5 per cent of the votes cast. Ng only managed six per cent. There were 384 spoilt votes.

Election Commission secretary



BN leaders hoisting Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the victorious BN candidate Abdul Aziz Mat Kiram (left).

Datuk Kamaruzaman Mohd Noor said he was satisfied with the turnout, described as a usual figure for a by-election.

He also dismissed the opposition's boycott as a non-event.

In the 200 general election, 76.6 per cent of voters turned up, while 73.4 per cent cast their

votes in the 1999 general election.

Abdul Aziz was overwhelmed with the people's support and he vowed to repay them by working hard for his constituency.

"I thank (Deputy Prime Minister) Datuk Seri Najib Razak, (Pahang Menteri Besar) Datuk Seri

Adnan Yaakob and the BN machinery for their tireless effort in getting me elected," he said.

Ng, when contacted, said he was happy to have contributed to the democratic process.

"I didn't win but at least I managed to push the government to bring in projects for the people here," he said.

He will continue to help his father with their trading business.

Pas and Parti Keadilan Rakyat boycotted the by-election, claiming the EC was biased against them and favoured the BN.

Voting was brisk throughout the day as the BN machinery went into overdrive to get voters to the 12 polling stations in the constituency.

There are 10,525 registered voters, comprising 73 per cent Malays, 14 per cent Chinese, and 13 per cent Indians and Orang Asli 13 in the constituency. There are 14 postal voters.

The by-election was called following the death of Datuk Tengku Paris Tengku Razlan.

In the last general election, Tengku Paris won the seat with a majority of 2,761 votes. He polled 5,414 votes while Dr Mohamed Nilam Abdul Manap from Pas received 2,653 votes.