

Perception of falling support wrong, says Najib

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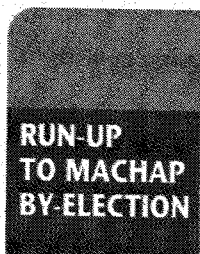
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RAUB: The perception that there is declining Chinese support for the Barisan Nasional is probably exaggerated, the deputy prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak said those counting on the BN to lose the Machap by-election were banking on the much-hyped argument that the constituency, with Chinese voters making up almost half of its electorate, would be a different playing field from the recent Batu Talam by-election.

"They are saying that we are losing support among the Chinese community but the truth is that even in Malay-majority Batu Talam, we could see the trend being actually the other way around."

Najib was attending the BN's thanksgiving ceremony for the



coalition's by-election victory at Batu Talam in Kampung Segu Tat near here yesterday.

He said during the Batu Talam by-election, Chinese voters had come out in full support of the BN as seen in the Cheroh area where they formed the majority.

When asked on the BN's losses in Chinese-majority constituencies in the Sarawak state election last year, Najib said the situation was different in the peninsula and that the results in Sarawak were heavily influ-

enced by local issues.

"Despite what is said about the voting trend of the Chinese community, I am sure they realise that only the BN can ensure a better future for them.

"I am confident the Chinese voters of Machap will feel this way when they cast their votes."

Najib said the BN government would fulfil its promise to bring more development to Batu Talam.

He said projects, such as roads and bridges worth RM25.4 million, would be implemented in the constituency over the next two years.

On Felda's replanting policy, Najib, who is the minister in charge, said the land development authority would be instructed to review the work of sub-contractors, some of whom had performed poorly.

"We'll rectify problems faced by the settlers arising from the replanting policy."