

PM: A WIN AGAINST SLANDER, RACISM

Pelangai polls win boosts govt's efforts to promote national development agenda, says Anwar

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BARISAN Nasional's victory in the Pelangai state seat by-election on Saturday reflects the unity government's success in combating the politics of slander and racism.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said: "This victory is a continuation of our excellence in the Pulaui parliamentary seat and Simpang Jeram state seat by-elections.

"Our cooperation in the unity government succeeded in breaking down the politics of slander and racism.

"It inspires the unity government to continue promoting the national development agenda for the wellbeing of the people based on the Madani economic framework."

He said this in a post on Facebook, thanking the election machinery and voters who put their trust in the unity government.

Datuk Amizar Abu Adam, 50, helped BN retain the seat for the 10th time, garnering a 2,949-vote majority to beat Perikatan Nasional's Kasim Samat and independent candidate Haslihelmy D.M. Zulhasni.

Political analysts said BN pulled off a masterstroke by fielding Amizar and he lived up to expectations.

Amizar lost the contest for the Ketari state seat under the Bentong parliamentary constituency in the 15th General Election (GE15) last year, and last March, he suffered another defeat in the race for the Bentong Umno vice-chairman post.

However, Amizar, whose family lives in Felda Chemomoi, got the nod from Umno's leadership to enter the Pelangai race.

He ticked all the right boxes, including being a local boy, being



Pelangai by-election winner Datuk Amizar Abu Adam (right) embracing a constituent during breakfast in Felda Chemomoi, near Bentong, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

well-versed on Felda matters as Pertubuhan Kami Anak Felda Malaysia treasurer-general, and understanding the late assemblyman Datuk Seri Johari Harun's aspirations to develop Pelangai.

Political analyst Professor Dr Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmood said Amizar was a "timely" choice as he is from a Felda settlement and would go the extra mile to gain support from this vote base.

"However, there is still work to be done to get Felda settlers to support BN.

"BN secured support from one Felda scheme (Felda Chemomoi), but PN won two others (Felda Kemasul and Felda Sungai Kemahal).

"Despite a 72 per cent voter turnout, BN's majority dropped from 4,048 in GE15 to 2,949, and that is significant."

Political analyst Mujibu Abdul Muis said the result was proof that Umno supporters were still with the party.

He said the outcome showed that the cooperation between BN and Pakatan Harapan in the unity government was gaining the people's acceptance.

"Perhaps BN can capitalise on its victory in Pelangai as a launching pad to continue with its 'blue wave' narrative to try to tame PN's 'green wave'.

"But the real test for BN is expected to be in Kemaman, if a by-

election is called for the parliamentary constituency in Terengganu. It was a BN stronghold before the seat fell to Pas in GE14 in 2018."

Universiti Malaya political analyst Dr Mohammad Tawfiq Yaakub said the by-election outcome did not mean the end of the "green wave".

He said the increase in the number of votes for Pas and PN in the by-election compared with GE15 showed that the opposition had managed to reduce Umno's influence in the constituency.

A PN insider said BN might have won over Felda Chemomoi voters because the settlement is Amizar's homeground, adding that even though PN's candidate also lives there, voters chose Amizar.

"PN secured a huge number of votes in Felda Kemasul, but only narrowly won in Felda Sungai Kemahal, which has always been a BN stronghold as the majority of first-generation settlers are from districts in Pahang.

"PN expected to get more votes in Chemomoi, but it did not materialise and ruined our chances.

"PN's focus in Pelangai was on Malay voters, as it was tough to get support from non-Malays in Manchis, Telemong, new villages and estates.

"They are known to be hardcore MCA, MIC and DAP supporters.

"There are about 4,500 registered voters, but the turnout for non-Malays was about 60 per cent, compared with 80 per cent in the last general election." Additional reporting by Ilya Marsya Iskandar

