

**Umno Not 'Jaguh Kampung'**  
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**By Ahmad Shukran Shaharudin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 25 (Bernama) -- With Umno's 62nd general assembly just days away, the party feels that support for it is not limited to rural areas only (called "jaguh kampung" in Malay) as made out by some.

Its leaders say that although the Barisan Nasional (BN) lost in by-elections held post the last general election (GE) in urban areas like Permatang Pauh, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Gantang, most urbanites still had faith in Umno and the BN to govern the nation well and fairly.

The perception could have arisen because of the 16 by-elections held since the last GE in March 2008, eight were won by the BN and the other eight by the opposition.

Umno, which contested on the BN ticket in three parliamentary by-elections, lost all three, in Permatang Pauh, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Gantang.

But in state by-elections, Umno contested seven out of 10 and won five of them - Bagan Pinang, Galas, Tenang, Merlimau and Kerdu.

Galas and Kerdu can be considered real rural seats but not Tenang in Labis, Bagan Pinang in Port Dickson and Merlimau, which is located near the historical Melaka city.

Umno vice president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal rubbished such perceptions saying support should not be measured according to constituencies won.

"We cannot deny that the Chinese community (in urban areas) support us. They support the BN and Umno but the percentage might not be high enough to strengthen our success," he told Bernama.

Shafie, who is also Rural and Regional Development Minister, said as such, the BN needed candidates who were accepted by voters both in urban and rural areas.

He was also confident that the attitude of voters would change to help Umno win back constituencies it lost in the last GE.

"This is because I believe voters in both rural and urban constituencies want a brighter future which only the BN and Umno can deliver," he said.

Meanwhile, Cheras Umno head Senator Datuk Syed Ali Al-Habshee said the perception that Umno was a "jaguh kampung" was not correct because urban Malays still supported the party but were not willing to be very open about it.

"There is an increase in the percentage of support (for Umno among urban Malays). They are more like observers from afar but do not reject Umno's struggle. They are hoping for help from Umno and this is what Cheras Umno is doing," said Syed Ali, who is also Federal Territory Umno secretary.

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