

**GE13 an urban, not Chinese swing, say analysts**  
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**BY BOO SU-LYN**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 — The outcome of Election 2013 was not simply the result of a “Chinese tsunami” as Datuk Seri Najib Razak has claimed but a major swing in the urban and middle-class electorate that saw Malaysia’s urban-rural rift widen, analysts have said.

In their preliminary reading of the vote trend, analysts noted that despite the increase in Chinese support for Pakatan Rakyat (PR), the political tsunami had also swept with it “large numbers of the Malays”, many among them forming part of the country’s middle- to upper-class voters.

“They received Malay middle-class support, especially in urban areas,” political analyst Datuk Dr Shamsul Amri Baharuddin told The Malaysian Insider, referring to PR.

“So the DAP majority increased because of disgruntled Malay young voters’ support... in conclusion, to label racial polarisation is too easy. Two other factors operate simultaneously with race: class (rich-poor, middle class) and spatial (urban and rural),” said the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) founding director of Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA).

Shamsul Amri said the DAP majority increased because of disgruntled Malay young voters’ support. Although Najib’s Barisan Nasional (BN) retained federal power in the country’s tightest election in history, the coalition lost major cities and towns from George Town to Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Malacca and big towns in Johor.

BN failed to win Selangor and Penang — two of the most industrialised states in Malaysia — although it retook Kedah, the mostly-rural rice-bowl state.

The DAP decimated the MCA in Election 2013, with party stalwart Lim Kit Siang defeating Johor BN chief Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman by a whopping 14,762 votes in the Gelang Patah federal seat, besides sweeping Kulai, Kluang and Bakri in Johor.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said the BN component party would not take up any government post after winning only seven parliamentary seats, less than half of the 15 federal seats it won in Election 2008.

BN chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak said late Sunday night that the newly-elected BN government would embark on national reconciliation efforts to unite Malaysians, after what he termed as the “Chinese tsunami” of the 13th general election that BN won with a smaller majority than Election 2008.

Political analyst Dr Lim Teck Ghee, however, pointed out that PR won more than half of the popular vote, showing that the coalition had received support from “large numbers of Malay and other non-Chinese voters”.

“The results in Selangor, which has the highest percentage of urban population, as well as in the other west coast states, certainly showed this urban middle-class trend,” Lim told The Malaysian Insider.

“Large numbers of Malays form part of this middle class, perhaps as many as non-Malays,”

he observed.

The Centre for Policy Initiative (CPI) director said the vote against BN appeared largely because this segment of the electorate was better informed and less influenced by the mainstream and BN-friendly print media.

Wong said young voters who wanted change backed PR across ethnic lines. He said middle-class voters are generally more concerned about corruption, good governance and cost of living issues, and are less affected by the demonisation of the opposition and BN's alleged play on racial and religious sentiments.

Political analyst Wong Chin Huat said young voters who wanted change backed PR across ethnic lines.

"Pakatan says let's try something new — you can move away from racial categories. So you're talking about questions of values," Wong told The Malaysian Insider.

"Young voters who are much more confident and who want to embrace a changing world will be for Pakatan," said the Monash University lecturer.

Veteran newsman Datuk A. Kadir Jasin observed that the 13-party BN coalition not only drew fewer seats in the 222-member Dewan Rakyat and 12 state assemblies in yesterday's general election compared to 2008, but also lost the popular vote for the first time since polls in 1969.

"Is it not possible that this is not a Chinese tsunami or racial chauvinism but a Malaysian tsunami that is centred on the aspiration and new reality, especially among young voters?" the man who had been group editor-in-chief of the public-listed News Strait Times Press during the Mahathir administration wrote in his blog yesterday.

There were about 2.5 million first-time voters out of 13.3 million eligible voters in Election 2013 that saw an 84.84 per cent voter turnout, the highest in Malaysian history.

BN, which had campaigned on maintaining security and peace, lost an additional seven federal seats and 71 state seats to PR in yesterday's polls. BN and PR won 133 and 89 federal seats, as well as 275 and 230 state seats respectively.

For federal seats, BN polled 5,237,699 votes to the Pakatan Rakyat parties' combined 5,623,984 ballots. The three-party pact of PKR, PAS and the DAP also surpassed BN in state seats, pulling in 4,879,699 votes to the 13-member coalition's 4,513,997 ballots.

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