

**People debunk Najib's 'Chinese tsunami' call**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 — It was no such thing — people say Datuk Seri Najib Razak got it wrong when he blamed the losses suffered by his ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) on a “Chinese tsunami”.

They say the situation is far more nuanced because the opposition also won more Malay seats in addition to Chinese-majority ones, according to a report in The Straits Times today.

The Singapore daily reported that in fact the opposition won mostly in urban areas, populated by both Chinese and Malay voters.

“There is definitely a racial element but it’s also important to recognise the urban-rural divide,” it quoted political columnist Karim Raslan as saying.

Urban voters tend to focus on big issues such as abuse of power and transparency in public life. In rural areas, the focus tends to be more on the relationship between the politician and voter, the newspaper reported.

This is why the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) thrives in urban areas, while the BN prospers in the rural due to its extensive grassroots network, it added.

“It was a ‘Malaysian tsunami’, and not a ‘Chinese tsunami’,” said DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang, who scored one of the most dramatic victories in this general election when he decisively won Gelang Patah in Johor, a constituency with 34 per cent Malay voters.

That suggests Malays voted for Lim too, even against his popular rival, outgoing Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, The Straits Times reported.

The Chinese-based DAP did the best among the three component parties in the PR coalition. The party won 38 of the 51 seats it contested.

Najib said the BN was hurt by Chinese voters going over to the opposition and warned that such polarisation of votes could cause tensions. “What is important is that we reject extremism and racism,” he said, soon after the BN obtained a simple majority.

But political analysts say PR made inroads not only with the Chinese ground but also into Malay areas, particularly urban seats, the daily reported.

Aside from Gelang Patah, PR also won big — with a margin of more than 40,000 votes — in Serdang, a seat in Selangor where 40 per cent of voters are Malay.

Likewise, in Puchong, with a similar Malay base, its victory margin was more than 30,000 votes. The high scores could not have been attained without significant Malay support.

The seats of Kulai and Bakri in Johor, and Klang in Selangor, also had more than one-third Malays, but were won by the DAP with respectable margins of more than 5,000 votes, The Straits Times reported.

The daily said the DAP's Malay-based partners — PKR and PAS — also held their ground in Malay-majority seats in Terengganu, Selangor, Kedah and Kelantan, although they did not do as well as the DAP.

Former New Straits Times editor Datuk A. Kadir Jasin asked in a blog: "Is it not possible that this was not a 'Chinese tsunami' or racial chauvinism, but a Malaysian tsunami based on new realities and aspirations of the young?"

It is a view with which political analyst Ibrahim Suffian of the Merdeka Center concurs. "We are probably seeing the emergence of class-based politics, with the urban and middle class responding to the message of the opposition," he was quoted as saying. "But the opposition needs to do more to address latent socio-economic concerns of the Malay community."

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