

Two-thirds of Pakatan GE13 wins in multi-racial seats, research shows
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 22 – Pakatan Rakyat (PR) won in 59 mixed-race federal seats, almost double its 30 wins in Chinese-majority seats in Malaysia’s Election 2013, according to a new research, debunking Barisan Nasional’s (BN) claim of a “Chinese Tsunami” that cost it more losses.

Independent online research house PoliTweet.org also said the ruling BN gained most of its votes from rural federal seats while PR increased its support from urban and semi-urban areas in the South-east Asian nation chasing developed nation status by 2020.

“BN represents the rural majority and can retain power with rural and semi-urban seats alone. This election highlighted PR’s weak areas which are rural seats, Bumiputra Sabah majority and Bumiputra Sarawak majority seats,” said the report, which can be found on PoliTweet’s official blog.

According to PoliTweet, 108 out of the 133 seats (81 per cent) won by BN came from rural seats, while PR won urban or semi-urban seats with almost the same percentage (72 out of 89 seats).

PR won all 16 urban Chinese-majority seats, 12 urban Malay seats and 12 urban mixed seats, giving them 40 out of the total 43 urban seats (93 per cent). In comparison, BN only won four urban Malay and one urban mixed seats.

Out of the 54 semi-urban seats, PR won 34 of them (63 per cent). BN won the rest of the semi-urban seats, with Malay semi-urban areas making the bulk of it at 12 seats.

PoliTweet also pointed out that PR had won more urban and semi-urban Malay-majority seats than BN, effectively making Malay-majority seats no longer a guaranteed win for BN.

For its research, PoliTweet categorised seats into three categories which do not follow Election Commission’s (EC) own classification, but rather were based on Google maps satellite imagery and EC’s maps.

PoliTweet defined “rural” areas as those containing villages, small towns or farmlands, and tend to be physically large with a low population. “Urban” areas are cities covered by some form of urban development. “Semi-urban” areas are a mix of the two.

Under the three categories, PoliTweet grouped 125 seats as rural, 54 as semi-urban, and 43 as urban.

Urban areas made up slightly more than half of Chinese-majority seats, but Malay-majority seats are still predominantly rural. There are however more Malay-majority semi-urban seats than Chinese-majority and mixed areas added together.

The research house also highlighted the low probability of BN regaining urban seats, as BN obtained only 47 per cent of popular vote in semi-urban seats and 36 per cent in urban seats, compared to the 57 per cent it had amassed in rural seats.

The last Population and Housing Census in 2010 showed that urban population in Malaysia has been on a steady increase since the 1960's, with 71 per cent of Malaysians living in urban areas. The World Bank put the number slightly higher at 72 per cent.

Federal Territories Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya both have reached 100 per cent urbanisation, while Selangor and Pulau Pinang – both currently ruled by PR – are the next highest with over 90 per cent of urbanisation.

Coincidentally, Selangor was the most populous state with 5.46 million people living in it, and together with Putrajaya, had the highest growth rates in Malaysia caused by migration and work opportunities.

In a forum organised by Universiti Malaya Centre of Democracy and Election (UMCEDEL) last week, independent pollster Merdeka Centre noted that voters were obviously split between different classes, with the working and lower-income classes mostly voting for BN, and the middle and upper classes for PR.

Pointing towards intra-ethnic differences, Merdeka Centre director Ibrahim Suffian suggested that the votes were not split according to races but more towards the different ideologies presented by both BN and PR.

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