

## **Anwar: Votes increased for Pakatan**

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KUALA LUMPUR: The reduced majority obtained by Pakatan Rakyat in the just concluded Kajang state seat by-election is irrelevant as support for the opposition pact reached almost 60% in the polls, Parliamentary Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim said today.

“We had popular support. (The reduced majority was) because the number of voter turnout was low. But we increased (our votes) from 57% to 59.71%. Don’t depend on TV3 for analysis. Use an objective basis,” he said when asked to comment on the polls at the Parliament lobby.

“What is assuring to me is the substantial increase in popular support for Pakatan Rakyat...this is very commendable indeed. Second is the support across racial groups,” he added.

Anwar said Pakatan Rakyat, made up of PAS, DAP and PKR, had retained higher voter support from the Malays, despite Umno claiming that the coalition would not be able to obtain 50% votes from the Malay community.

“Here, we didn’t get 50% in the last general election, but now, we have surpassed that. A major breakthrough in terms of assessing and testing our strength.”

He pointed out MCA had acknowledged they only garnered 25% of the Chinese support last night, despite claiming to represent the Chinese in Malaysia.

“MCA relies only on Umno, including all the racism and extremism in Umno. But Alhamdulillah, we in Pakatan managed to garner more Malay support. This is a reassuring [trend]. Among the Chinese, the Indians and the Malays, we still command the majority support,” said Anwar.

Anwar was unperturbed that MCA had increased its support by 7% compared to last year, quipping that this meant the Chinese party would have to wait centuries before it could make a political comeback.

“This is a Chinese candidate representing Chinese interest, and that’s the most they can get. I think that is a catastrophe as far as MCA is concerned.”

“What we are comfortable of, we have a Malay candidate, with a tudung, representing fortunately all Malaysians, but still garner 75% of Chinese support which is to my mind remarkable,” said Anwar.

He also dismissed the lower voter turnout, saying that the reduced number was expected, adding that as long as the turnout was above 60%, it was still considered comfortable.

Yesterday, Anwar’s wife and PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail defeated MCA vice-president Chew Mei Fun with a majority of 5,379 votes to win the state seat. She polled 16,379

votes whereas Chew polled 11,362 votes.

The Election Commission said the recorded voter turnout was low this time, at only 72.1% (28,314 voters), compared to a turnout of 87.9% in the May 5 general election last year.

The Kajang seat fell vacant following the voluntarily resignation of PKR state assemblyman Lee Chin Cheh.

In 2013, Lee garnered 19,571 registered voters, followed by Lee Ban Seng (BN-MCA) with 12,474 votes. The majority the last time around was 6,097 votes.

PKR wanted its party chief to win the seat with a thumping 10,000 vote majority. It had also wanted Chew to lose her deposit. But this did not materialise.

PKR had engineered the entire by-election to allow Anwar to contest for the seat and eventually replace Abdul Khalid Ibrahim as the Selangor Menteri Besar.

However, the Court of Appeal on March 7 overturned his 2012 sodomy acquittal, effectively disqualifying him from the race. Wan Azizah was immediately named as a replacement candidate.

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