

## **Kajang By-Election The Yardstick For Public Support?**

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KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The Kajang state seat by-election slated on March 23 is seen as the yardstick for Pakatan Rakyat (PR) that rules Selangor and the Barisan Nasional (BN) that helms the Federal Government in gauging the support from the ground.

Most political analysts believe the political upheavals in Selangor may have some impact on the voting trend this time around.

As for this by-election, a total of 39,278 voters, with about half of them being Malays, 40 percent Chinese and 10 percent Indians will decide on the candidate of their choice.

The Kajang state seat fell vacant after its incumbent Lee Chin Cheh from Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) quits on 27 Jan, paving the way for PKR's de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to vie for the seat.

With Anwar in the picture, analysts see the contest in Kajang as a 'David vs Goliath' battle. BN has yet to announce its candidate but several independent candidates have offered themselves to take on the opposition whip.

### **CAN THE VOTERS DECIDE**

A political analyst Associate Professor Datuk Dr Samsul Adabi Mamat from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) noted that the by-election serves as the platform for both sides to evaluate the support of young voters and fence sitters.

"The Kajang by-election should serve as the yardstick to see whether the public support for BN and Pakatan Rakyat has increased or decreased, apart from highlighting the voting trends in the constituency," he said to Bernama when contacted.

### **THE RISING COST OF LIVING AND RESIGNATIONS**

Obviously, the rising cost of living and the sudden departure of the incumbent will be hogging the campaign theme.

It will be nice to see how far the opposition makes inroads from the rising cost of living and whether BN could draw the maximum amount of votes to its side due to the abrupt resignation of the incumbent.

Samsul Adabi pointed out that the rising cost of living all this while has provided fodder for the opposition and stands on BN's way.

As for BN, Lee's sudden resignation to pave way for Anwar may help BN counter the opposition by pointing out the by-election will cost taxpayers RM1.6 million.

Concurring with Samsul Adabi, another political analyst Associate Professor Dr Mohd Rizal Mohd Yaakop noted that the rising cost of living is a compelling issue that affected the people.

"Voters in Kajang cannot be equated with voters in Petaling Jaya or Kuala Lumpur...as Kajang is still considered a suburb and the rise in the cost of living would have a profound impact unlike in the cities," he said.

#### THE VOTING MINDS

Mohd Rizal noted that the youngsters would make comparisons before deciding on the party of their choice.

"The young voters' mentality is that they like to make comparisons with the previous general election and in the event PR wins the Kajang by-election, they will be convinced that the political tsunami will continue," he said.

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia's (UPNM) Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Associate Professor Dr Mohamed Fadzil Che Din said that those in the cities too were not matured voters.

"Voters in the cities should no longer talk about development as they already have everything and instead should focus on progress and well-being," he said.

During the 13th General Election, Lee won the Kajang state constituency with a 6,824 votes majority in a six corner fight involving BN, Berjasa and three independents.

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