

Allah issue will not translate into votes for Barisan, survey finds

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More than half of Kajang voters, or 55%, feel that the Allah issue and how it is being played up by Umno, will not translate into more votes for the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the upcoming by-election, a survey has found.

The Universiti Malaya Centre for Elections and Democracy (UMCEDEL) survey released today found that 60% of Malay Muslim Kajang voters feel that the Allah issue will not lead to more support for the BN and Umno.

At the same time, 85% of the survey's respondents who lived in villages scattered throughout the mostly urban constituency, also felt that the Allah issue is not a vote-getter for them.

The results fly in the face of attempts by Umno, especially its Selangor branch, to rally support to itself by banning non-Muslims, particularly Christians from East Malaysia, from using the term Allah in their Bahasa Malaysia bible.

Instead, the 576 respondents in UMCEDEL's survey, which was done in the Kajang state constituency, felt that bread and butter issues, such as the rising cost of living and the price of homes were top priority for them ahead of the by-election.

In tabling the centre's findings, UMCEDEL director Datuk Dr Mohammad Redzuan Othman said that 59% of respondents felt that the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia pay out scheduled on February 22 would also not sway support towards the BN.

Redzuan explaining the issues that Kajang voters are most concerned about during the presentation of the survey findings to the media at Universiti Malaya today. – The Malaysian Insider pic by Afif Abd Halim, February 20, 2014."BR1M has been important in swaying the vote in the general election. But in Kajang this does not look to be the case," he said.

On the other hand, 69% of respondents felt that the rise in the cost of living would drive support towards Pakatan Rakyat. The highest number of voters who felt this were civil servants, with 79% of them saying that the rise in the price of goods and services would drive votes to Pakatan.

The by-election was triggered by the sudden resignation of its state assemblyperson Lee Chin Cheh of PKR.

PKR had admitted that Lee's resignation and the by-election was a carefully laid out plan, called the "Kajang move" by its architects, for the party's de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to enter the Selangor government.

Both the party and Anwar have strongly indicated that it is to allow him to take over as menteri besar from the popular Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim.

The survey canvassed the opinions of 576 voters in Kajang, which is equivalent to more than 10% of the constituency's voter population. It was conducted on February 14 and 15.

The survey also canvassed what were the issues on the minds of Kajang voters, with 83% of them choosing the high price of houses as the constituency's main problem, followed by crime at 79%.

"If you live in Kajang you will realise that you cannot buy a house there for less than half a million ringgit. Even though Kajang is outside Kuala Lumpur, we can classify it as being in the Klang Valley.

"It is also close to Putrajaya, which also drives up the price of houses," said Redzuan.

"And I don't even have to get into the crime rate. Even my house has been robbed. So, at least we will get more cops with this by-election."

The other issues are traffic congestion in downtown Kajang at 68%, local council issues, such as garbage not being picked up and drains not being cleared (67%), and floods at 52%. – February 20, 2014.

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