

**Slight increase in Malay support for DAP in Teluk Intan, but Chinese, Indian votes plunge**  
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**By Eileen Ng**

Despite failing to retain the Teluk Intan seat, DAP has found a "silver lining" in yesterday's results, which saw a small increase in support among the Malay voters, although there was a sharp fall in Chinese and Indian votes, said party strategist Dr Ong Kian Ming.

In his early assessment of the by-election which saw DAP candidate Dyana Sofya Mohd Daud losing by a razor thin majority of 238 votes against Barisan Nasional's Datuk Mah Siew Keong, Ong said the party's support among Malay voters in Teluk Intan increased from 25% in GE13 to 28%. "In six Malay majority polling stations, the DAP experienced small increases in the overall support ranging from 0.7% to 3.4%, an encouraging sign given that we were not expecting the Malay support to increase," he said.

But support from the Chinese community, DAP's traditional vote bank, fell by 15%, from 85% in last year's national polls to 70% in the by-election year, which Ong termed as the "most pessimistic" projection.

"This was somewhat surprising given the positive response the campaign was receiving from the Chinese voters including the mammoth ceramah on the final day of the campaign," he said in a statement today.

Meanwhile, support for DAP among Indian voters also decreased by 10%, from 62% in GE13 to 52% in yesterday's by-election.

Ong said while the the party failed to retain the semi-urban seat for the third time, he believed new grounds were paved by fielding the 27-year-old Dyana who is considered a political greenhorn, especially in terms of breaking down racial and gender barriers.

On the upside, Ong expressed confidence that more young Malays would look at DAP as a possible avenue for political activism and that more youths will support Pakatan Rakyat pact in its quest to move away from race-based politics.

"We saw a glimpse of this in Dyana's campaign in Teluk Intan. The amount of excitement and interest which she generated at the national level especially among young Malays was, dare I say, unprecedented.

"Because of Dyana's candidacy, UiTM students were talking about the DAP and not necessarily in a negative manner!"

Dyana's ethnicity and educational background (she graduated in law from UiTM) had made her a target of attacks by Umno leaders, after she was named the DAP candidate for Teluk Intan.

"At the local level, Dyana received a tremendous reception from kids and also young people wherever she went. While most of them were not voters, they will be voters in the near future and young leaders such as Dyana are much better positioned to win them over," he said.

As such, the challenge, said the Serdang MP, was for Pakatan to provide the necessary platform for young leaders, especially those from the Malay community, to present creative ideas and credible policies to convince the younger voters that they are better placed than BN to lead the country into the future.

In the aftermath of yesterday's results, Ong said Pakatan will need to also ponder over the effects of issues and problems within the pact, which might turn voters off.

"Firstly, will turnout in the next general election be as high as GE13 especially if voters are turned off by the problems affecting Pakatan such as the disagreement over hudud, problems in party elections, leadership issues within Pakatan in the state of Selangor, the Allah and the Malay bible issue, just to name a few?" he asked.

"There is no guarantee that these problems will not escalate leading up to the next general election and if so, many voters may choose not to come back to vote.

"The lower turnout which partly caused DAP to lose Teluk Intan may be replicated in many other such seats," he warned.

He said the coalition need to develop a convincing message to other constituencies like Teluk Intan which are semi-urban and which are more likely to be convinced by promises of development rather than the pledge to combat corruption and race-based politics.

These include seats where both PR and BN are deemed vulnerable such as Beruas, Bakri, Raub, Bukit Gantang, Kluang, Kuala Kedah, Bentong, Cameron Highlands, Labis and Bagan Serai.

"A different and complementary strategy to what Pakatan has been doing at the national level may be needed in order for PR to defend and win these kinds of seats," he added.

Meanwhile, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the party would have to work hard in the future to convince outstation voters to return to boost voter turnout.

It also has to get voters to understand that development is a right and not a privilege, and to accept a new Malaysia without racial politics.

This, he said, means a scenario where a Malay can represent a non-Malay and vice-versa.

"Neither I nor any DAP leaders had blamed Dyana for our loss. DAP has also not blamed any community for not supporting sufficiently the DAP. Instead DAP thanks all those who supported us for believing in DAP's dream of a new era of new politics without corruption in a new Malaysia for every citizen," he said in responding to some news report that he had blamed the political newbie's candidature for its narrow defeat.

"DAP shall continue to stick with Dyana Sofya for a new Malaysia. DAP urges all Malaysians, young and female, to join Dyana Sofya in the DAP to say 'No' to racial politics," Lim said in a statement today.

The Penang chief minister said his party accepted the "true verdict" of the electorate, adding that DAP will work to regain the support of every Malaysian in time for the 14th general election, which has to be called by 2018.

In congratulating Mah, Lim said the Gerakan president's first task is to get Umno minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to apologise for calling the Chinese ungrateful for throwing their support behind the opposition in last year's polls.

"Mah will have to prove that he can deliver on his promises made to Teluk Intan voters during the next three years and not just depend on 'goodies' given to the voters during the election period," he said. – June 1, 2014.

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