

## **WAN AZIZAH VICTORY 'SETS BACK PAKATAN'S PROGRESS'**

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**By Super Admin**

(Free Malaysia Today) – There is nothing much to read into the by-election victory of Parti Keadilan Rakyat president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail in the family seat of Permatang Pauh this week, say political observers.

She won on Thursday, but with a reduced majority of 8,841 votes proportionate with a lower turnout of 73% turnout compared to 88.52% in 2013.

Wan Azizah polled 30,316, ahead of nearest rival Suhaimi Sabudin (Barisan Nasional) 21,475 votes, Salleh Isahak (independent) with 367 votes; and Azman Shah Othman (Parti Rakyat Malaysia) with 101, both lost their deposits.

Even if PKR suffered a reduction in votes garnered it was a drop of only some 800 votes, on the assumption that all parties enjoyed the same level of support as in the 2013 general election.

Many reasons have given for why PKR won and Umno lost again.

Among the issues were: Sympathy for her husband, jailed Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim; the predicament of a prisoner's widow; Pakatan Rakyat campaign strategy, Barisan's outdated campaign style; the Goods and Services Tax; Dr Mahathir Mohamed relentless attacks on the prime minister, Najib Razak, the 1Malaysia Development Bhd scandal, the Tabung Haji-1MDB land deal, and a PAS boycott that never came.

The reasons could be valid. The truth is that the political landscape in Permatang Pauh has remained unchanged, as with Rompin, where another by-election was held on Tuesday.

Pakatan Rakyat, through PKR, still holds majority power in this parliamentary constituency and BN has to work harder if it wants to wrest it back.

The two by-election results could be an indication that similarly at the next general election, the political landscape would remain at status quo unless something drastic and dramatic happens.

Both political coalitions are not gaining any ground: otherwise someone like Wan Azizah could not have won.

Even PKR supporters acknowledged that Wan Azizah's victory merely upheld the Anwar family's hold on PKR, nothing more.

Some had privately preferred a Barisan victory because it would lead to long-overdue federal development programmes being carried out in the constituency.

Pakatan leaders Azmin Ali and Lim Guan Eng even had to pledge to take care of her two constituencies, Permatang Pauh in Penang and the Kajang state seat in Selangor, some 300km away.

"Had it won, BN would have used Permatang Pauh as a model to show what it can do for the people in Penang," said a pro-Pakatan blogger. "The people of Permatang Pauh would have got what they deserved after all.

"Wan Azizah is not a person who would work her socks up for the constituents. But all is lost now."

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