

GST, not hudud, cost BN drop in votes in Rompin, says Tuan Ibrahim
The Malaysian Insider
May 6, 2015
By Zulkifli Sulong

PAS's campaign strategy to focus on rejecting the goods and services tax (GST) and not the implementation of hudud was the main reason it succeeded in reducing Barisan Nasional (BN)'s majority in the Rompin by-election, said a senior party leader from the Islamist party.

Vice-president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man told The Malaysian Insider that the Islamist party only touched on the issue occasionally.

"Even in our election machinery meeting, hudud was not on the agenda because the issue has nothing to do with the people in Rompin," he said today.

BN's support dropped by 10% following the GST implementation, compared with the support it garnered in the same constituency two years ago at the 13th general election.

Tuan Ibrahim said a 10% swing in support for PAS in Pahang in the next general election could mean the state would fall to Pakatan Rakyat.

"We only need a 5% increase to win in Pahang. In Rompin, PAS's support increased by 10%," the Pahang PAS commissioner said.

He also said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak must heed the voices of the people, as evidenced in Rompin, by scrapping the GST.

Tuan Ibrahim agreed with Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob that the opinion of the grassroots should be taken into consideration.

"I agree with the Pahang MB who said that the government has to listen to the voices of the people, through the Rompin by-election.

"The success in almost halving BN's majority is down to our campaign which said one vote for PAS is one vote to reject GST. We made it our campaign slogan from the very beginning," he said.

Adnan yesterday said that the people are trying to send a message to the government following a drop in BN's majority.

"The voters are sending a message, GST and Felda are issues that are affecting the people and we have to deal with these issues," Adnan told reporters when met at Kuala Rompin yesterday.

PAS candidate Nazri Ahmad obtained 14,901 votes to 23,796 votes obtained by BN's Datuk Hasan Arifin, reducing BN's majority to 8,895 votes compared with the 15,114

vote majority the late Tan Sri Jamaluddin Jarjis obtained in the general election two years ago.

PAS cut almost 40% from BN's majority.

Tuan Ibrahim also revealed that PAS won five polling streams, including three Felda streams that they had never won before – namely, Felda Keratong 4 and 2, and Bandar Muadzam.

"Household issues have become the primary concern for the second generation Felda settlers. They find the prime minister's promises about reducing house prices to RM 35,000 difficult to believe," he said.

The clash between former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Najib also helped PAS's campaign, according to Tuan Ibrahim.

"Tun Dr Mahathir opposed GST. So when we campaign opposing it too, it leaves a deep impact for the people, as GST involves everyone," he said.

In fact, he said that BN's plan to have the Rompin by-election earlier so it would serve as a morale booster for the BN in the Permatang Pauh by-election did not work out as expected.

"This plan failed. We hope Rompin can help Permatang Pauh," he said of PKR's bid to retain the seat tomorrow.

Tuan Ibrahim also said there had been internal jostling within Umno over the choice of the Rompin candidate.

"Before this, we saw Puteri Umno campaigning door-to-door, which was effective, but we did not see that this time," he said, adding that Umno Youth wanted the candidate to come from their ranks as well. – May 6, 2015

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