

Don't dream of Felda as your vote bank, Pakatan tells BN

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By Nawar Firdaws and Melissa Darlyne Chow

Muhyiddin Yassin of PPBM says Pakatan Harapan has received clear feedback that a large number of Felda settlers are now supporting the coalition.

PETALING JAYA: PPBM president Muhyiddin Yassin has a curt message for those in Barisan Nasional (BN): "Don't dream of Felda being your vote bank anymore."

Speaking to reporters at the party's headquarters here today, the former deputy prime minister said Felda areas had always been Umno's stronghold.

But as of late, the support of Felda settlers had shifted significantly to the opposition coalition of Pakatan Harapan (PH), Muhyiddin said.

"We have received clear feedback that a large number of Felda settlers have given Pakatan great support.

"That is why Felda settlements are one of our main focus areas."

He said there were over 50 parliamentary seats with Felda settlements, and that the opposition would be campaigning in all those areas.

Muhyiddin's statement followed that of Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak today, who said he was confident "grateful" Felda settlers would remain with BN.

Salleh also said the opposition's goal of winning Felda settlers over was just a pipe dream, as the Umno-led BN coalition had long been caring for their welfare through the granting of subsidies and annual bonuses.

However, Amanah strategy director Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, speaking to FMT, shared Muhyiddin's views.

He said Felda was no longer a BN stronghold, with the formidable duo of Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Anwar Ibrahim leading the opposition's charge now.

He said the dwindling support of Felda settlers for BN was visible, and if the Rompin by-election was anything to go by, Salleh "must be more tactful and not be too bullish".

Dzulkefly also said it was clear from the by-election results that the opposition had made inroads there. He pointed out that BN's majority was cut by half, and that the opposition had won in four polling stations.

"Invoke's recent findings are even more revealing. Only six of the 52 seats have seen a bigger shift for BN.

"This gives more optimism to the opposition that the perceived 'fixed deposit' for BN is finally crumbling.

"We still have ample time to mount serious onslaughts in these constituencies. With the iconic formidable duo of Tun M-DSAI leading the charge, figuratively, Felda is no longer a BN bastion."

Dzulkefly added that the opposition's battle cry of "Sayangi Malaysia, Hapus Kleptokrasi" would resonate well with Felda's settlers, "as they are also undoubtedly the primary victims of this kleptocratic government".

PH's solutions to their many predicaments, especially for second generation Felda settlers, were more attractive and sustainable, he said.

And while no one was disputing that former prime minister Abdul Razak, had done a good job for the Malays through Felda, he said Salleh must have been oblivious or sleeping on the job not to have noticed recent developments.

"The recent fallout between Isa Samad and Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd's (FGV) CEO is perhaps the grand finale.

"Isa being transferred thereafter speaks volumes of his perennial failures and the gross mismanagement of FGV. It is a very long list.

"Felda settlers are agonising over the current price of their shares and having to pay for their borrowings when purchasing their shares before," he added.

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