

## **BN popular in Kimanis but more youth backing opposition**

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KOTA KINABALU: While Kimanis MP Anifah Aman is busy travelling the world to fulfil his duties as foreign minister, the opposition is trying to make inroads into his constituency by emphasising its lack of development under Barisan Nasional (BN).

Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan) has been banking on this in its efforts to woo voters ahead of the 14th general election (GE14).

Its Kimanis youth chief, Abdul Kadir Jalani, said although the constituency was a BN stronghold, many problems had not been attended to by the government.

Kimanis

An iconic wooden shophouse in Kimanis town.

He said unemployment was high among youths and floods were recurrent, with more than 1,500 people displaced in an incident last year.

“It is now becoming a trend among young people here to go overseas to work.

“Many of them go to South Korea to work illegally in the farms there, essentially becoming illegal immigrants.

“So, we are all disappointed and many of us want change,” he told FMT.

Kadir said despite the 2014 opening of Petronas’ 100ha Sabah Oil and Gas Terminal and the establishment of power plants in Kimanis, the locals could only watch as job opportunities at these facilities were mostly for highly-skilled professionals.

“We locals do not have the needed skills. We can only work as security guards there,” he said.

“So while it’s good to see these projects in our constituency, they mean nothing to us.”

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Anifah (centre) giving away school bags to students in the Kimanis constituency.

While such issues may not be enough to topple BN there, they could leave a dent in the coalition’s armour as young voters increasingly pin their hopes on the opposition.

Anifah, who is Kimanis Umno chief, retained the seat for a third term in the last general election, garnering 13,754 votes against PKR’s Jaafar Ismail, who managed to get 8,031 votes.

The two state constituencies in Kimanis are also held by Umno members.

Bongawan is represented by Mohamad Alamin and Membakut by Mohd Arifin Mohd Arif, both of whom won by comfortable margins in 2013.

About 61% of the more than 29,000 voters in Kimanis are Muslim Bumiputeras while 35% are non-Muslim Bumiputeras. Chinese voters make up the remaining 4%.

Located 45km from Kota Kinabalu, Kimanis also has a learning institution established by Petronas to help Sabahans develop skills in the oil and gas industry.

The constituency's population of more than 55,000 is mainly involved in fishing and farming, particularly fruits and rubber. Many of them also work in the public sector.

They are expected to benefit from the Pan Borneo Highway project which is under construction, and the area has been touted as the location of Sabah's next international airport.

A new airport would boost the tourism industry, especially along the seaside where privately owned resorts are already contributing to the local economy.

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Sources: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/highlight/2018/03/12/bn-popular-in-kimanis-but-more-youth-backing-opposition/>