

BN all out to plug Bayan Baru flood woes

FREE MALAYSIA TODAY

March 15, 2018

By Robin Augustin

PETALING JAYA: Barisan Nasional (BN) is going all out to win the Bayan Baru seat along with its three state seats with a grand plan to resolve the state's flood woes.

Oh says that PKR can no longer count on Bayan Baru's sizeable Malay voter base.

Synonymous with progress and development since it was established in 1972, Bayan Baru has in recent times been badly hit by floods, and Bayan Baru Gerakan coordinator Oh Tong Keong believes that the people in the area are ready for a change.

The Bayan Baru parliamentary seat and the Pantai Jerejak, Batu Uban and Batu Maung state seats have been under PKR since the 2008 election.

However, Oh told FMT that BN had a good chance this time around as people could see that the state government's promises to resolve the flood issues were "nothing but words".

He was confident that if given a chance, BN would resolve Penang's flood woes in one term through the upgrading of infrastructure.

Oh added that PKR could no longer count on Bayan Baru's sizeable Malay voter base.

There are 90,000 voters in Bayan Baru, comprising Chinese (49%), Malays (39%) and Indians (12%).

"The last two elections, PAS supporters backed PKR, but now they won't," he said, adding that even the Chinese in Bayan Baru were angry with the DAP-led state government.

"All this while, DAP has been telling the Chinese how bad former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad is, about his cronies, his tolls.

"Now suddenly, they are friends. People are not stupid. I hope voters will remember how little the state government has done for Penang."



Sim acknowledged the challenges posed by floods in Bayan Baru, but says the state government is committed to upgrading infrastructure to mitigate the floods.

But PKR MP Sim Tze Tzin is optimistic of his party's ability to fend off BN and PAS in the 14th general election (GE14).

Speaking to FMT, he said the state government along with he and his party comrades had delivered results in Bayan Baru.

"We have drawn investments which have created job opportunities, especially in factories which are part of the global supply chain in the electric and electronics sector, and established the Business Process Outsourcing industry in 2014," he said.

Although some companies had left Penang, he added, the state government had drawn in new ones to take their place.

Sim acknowledged the challenges posed by floods in Bayan Baru, but said the state government was committed to upgrading infrastructure there to mitigate flooding and ease traffic congestion.

He pointed to the provision of affordable, low-cost and low-medium cost homes as another accomplishment of the Penang state government.

"When Gerakan was in power, if you wanted a low-cost home, you might have to wait up to 15 years. We have managed to reduce this to just four years."

As for affordable housing, Sim said there were enough homes in Bayan Baru priced between RM150,000 and RM300,000 that there was no longer a need to wait for supply.

In the 2008 and 2013 general elections, the main contenders in Bayan Baru were from BN and then-opposition pact Pakatan Rakyat.

This time, though, PAS will enter the fray as a third bloc and is expected to be a larger force than the many independent candidates of the past.

Still, Sim is confident that the Malay vote, which accounted for more than 50% of PKR's support in Bayan Baru, will continue to support the party.

"Bayan Baru people live in a multiracial environment, from the time they are born to the time they go to school and work. I don't think race and religion is much of a factor here when it comes to voting."

As for PAS, the Islamist party believes it has something neither BN nor Pakatan Harapan (PH) have: "clean" candidates.

"The other day, it was revealed in Dewan Rakyat that between 2013 and 2017, a total of 71 BN and 21 PH politicians were investigated by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.



Iszuree says PAS is for all.

"PAS politicians? None at all," said Bayan Baru PAS chief Iszuree Ibrahim.

"Our offer to the voters is candidates who have integrity and are clean. And even though PAS is fighting for Islam, we will also ensure the rights and interests of non-Muslims are protected.

"PAS is for all."

Iszuree said the party had done its homework and believes it stands a 50-50 chance of winning the Bayan Baru parliamentary seat and Batu Maung state seat.

The Batu Maung seat is currently held by Penang's exco for Islamic affairs Abdul Malik Abul Kassim, with whom Penang PAS has locked horns in the past over Islamic affairs in the state.

Iszuree said PAS understood that multi-cornered fights may occur if it contests in Bayan Baru.

“But what is important is that voters are given a choice, because we see that many people aren't happy with both BN and PH.”

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