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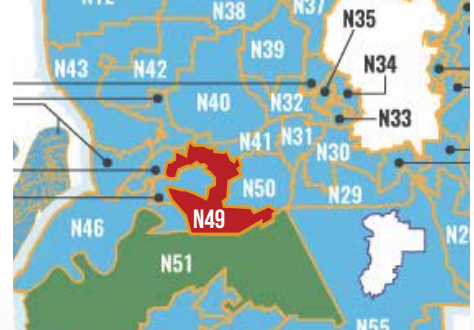
Centre for Governance
and Political Studies



N49 Sungai Kandis
By-Election Report

N49 SUNGAI KANDIS BY-ELECTION REPORT

This is an initial report on the N49 Sungai Kandis by-election which was held on the 4th of August 2018. This seat became vacant after the death of former assemblyman, Mat Shuhaimi Shafiei due to lymphatic cancer on 2 July 2018. The late Shuhaimi was a member of the Parti Keadalian Rakyat (PH), which during GE14 was a component and integral part of the ruling Pakatan PH coalition. This is the first by-election after the historic May 2018 General Election which saw the first change in federal government since independence.



BACKGROUND

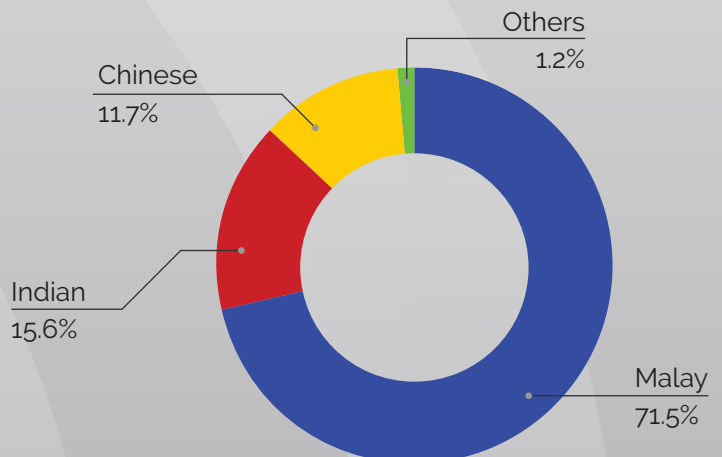
Pakatan Harapan (PH) secured the seat with a comfortable majority in a three cornered fight where then candidate Mat Shuhaimi Shafiei under the PH banner secured a comfortable share of 55.6% of the total votes cast. National sentiment, state machinery (Selangor), a three cornered fight and high voter turnout contributed to PH's comfortable win. As below, the details of the result -

	Votes	Percentage	Voter Turnout
PH	23,998	55.06%	43,585
BN	11,518	26.43%	
PAS	7,573	17.38%	
Bebas	76	0.17%	

PRU 14 RESULT

Looking at the demographics of the voters in the area, it is indisputable that Malays are the predominant voting bloc, encompassing over 71.5% of the voting population with a sizeable Indian voting bloc of 15.6%.

Even if both of BN and PAS votes were to combine, PH, in accepting their strong appeal to the Malay voters as per the results of GE14, would still win with a comfortable margin. From the start, winning the by election was bound to be an uphill task.



N49 SUNGAI KANDIS | CANDIDATES



LOKMAN NOOR ADAM

- UMNO central working committee member.
- Former JASA and MOF Comms Director
- Staunch defender of previous govt's policy and Najib Razak related issues.
- Media presence



ZAWAWI AHMAD MUGHNI

- Local PH leader
- Headmaster of a local Tahfiz school.
- Pretty low key nationally but well known locally.
- Low profile with strong islamic credentials.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



From our observations on the ground and through media analysis, Pakatan PH maneuvered in a low key fashion, with emphasis on the local manifesto, an economical and logical decision as PH now holds both state and federal government. What was proposed on that local manifesto was easily feasible with control and power. Zawawi's credentials as a religious teacher were used as a counter to the Islamic/Malay centric narrative against the BN Candidate. PH superstars came down occasionally to rile up the masses.



By securing a one on one fight, BN recieved the boost when PAS openly endorsed its candidate in Sungai Kandis, several overtures were made to PAS as a sign of Islam and Malay unity in Sungai Kandis. Issues such as Malay rights, Islamic rights, broken promises by the new government and prices of goods were a prominent feature in their campaign. The Malay-Islam narrative was the main theme of the campaign.

HYPOTHESIS

- a) With the absence of a PAS candidate and an open endorsement from the party for BN, this by-election was bound to expose the strength of the BN-PAS partnership. Could BN muster the Malay ground and play on Malay Islamic sentiment to cross the finish line? Even an increase in vote shares would outline a success of this strategy.
- b) This by-election would also put focus on whether PH's broken promises effect their voter share. BN has been steadfast on highlighting several promises that have not been met in the lead up to 100 days in power.

RESULTS (INITIAL)

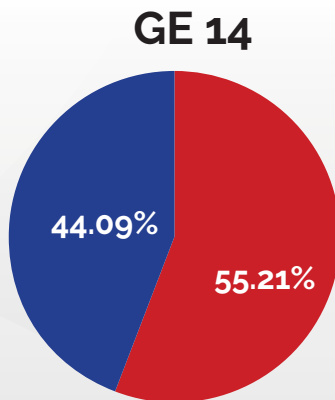
The analysis of the results are based on the general numbers, if more data is incorporated perhaps a more accurate and detailed reading can be done in regards to voting pattern based on demography, geographical location and age.

PH		BN		PAS		INDEPENDENT /PRM		SPOILT		TOTAL VOTES
23,998	55.21%	11,518	26.50%	7,573	17.42%	76	0.17%	305	0.70%	43,470
15,472	61.09%	9,585	37.84%	0	0.00%	97	0.38%	173	0.68%	25,327
-8,526	5.88%	-1,933	11.35%	-7,573	-17.42%	21	0.21%	-132		-18,143

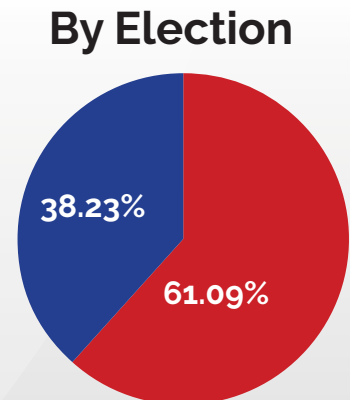
Results (GE14 Vs By Election)

	GE 14	By Election
Turnout	85.80%	49.40%
PH	55.21%	61.09%
Non PH	44.09%	38.23%
BN	26.50%	37.84%

VOTE SHARES



● PH
● Non PH



● PH
● Non PH

Even though BN's votes (in terms of percentage) increased by a whopping 11.35%, this increase does not come at the expense of the incumbent PH candidate. PH's share of the votes also increased by 5.88%. Though the straight fight and endorsement from PAS did benefit BN (as seen by the increase) when comparing with the GE14 result, the total share of Non PH votes actually dropped by 5.86%. In other words, if the turnout ratio of PH, BN and PAS voters are the same, then by right, **both BN and PAS are losing support compared to GE14.**

EARLY CONCLUSION:

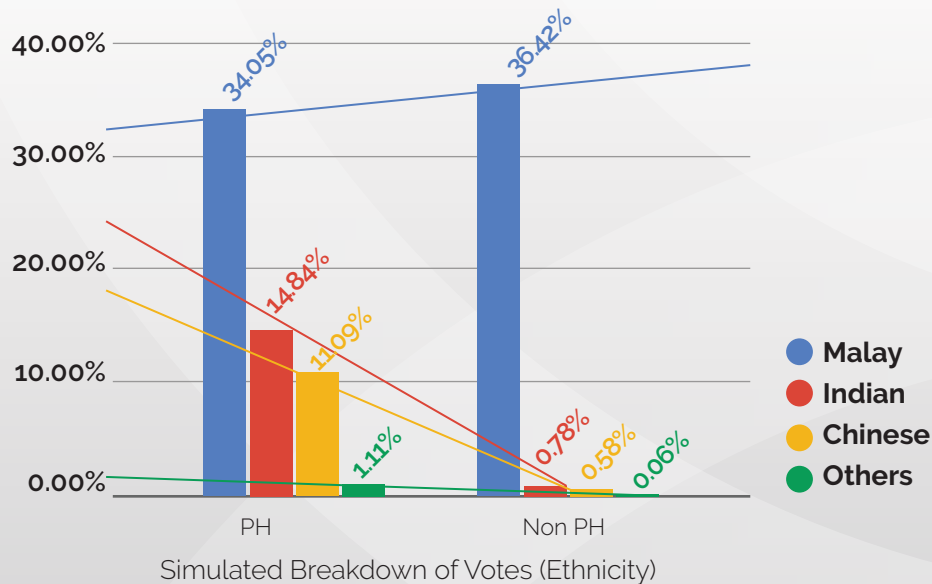
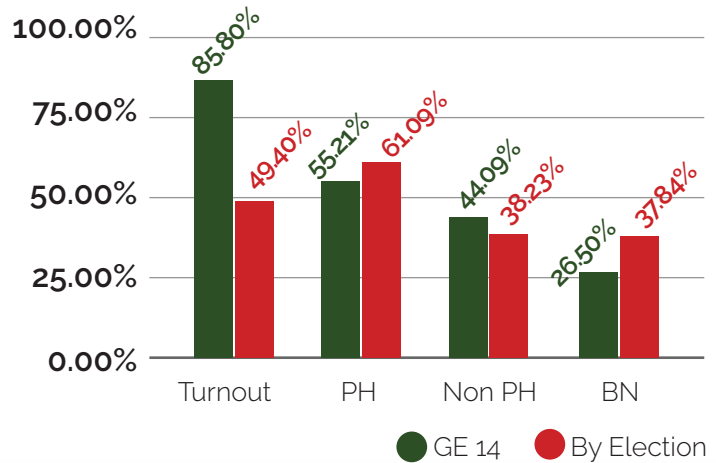
Based on the strategy adopted by BN in this by-election, several factors should have given them some key advantages, this includes:

- Low voter turnout, 49.4%. This is the lowest voter turnout in history. The former political paradigm would have implicated low voter-turnout as a bad signal for PH.
- Straight fight between BN and PH (as oppose to a three cornered fight). With this, Malay votes between PAS and BN would combine, thus benefiting the latter.
- Open Endorsement by PAS. Again, in the former political paradigm, this would have energized the Malay vote behind the BN.
- National prominence of various Malay centric and Islamic issues (eg. Appointment of non malay AG).

In context, it is crucial that we recognize that Sungai Kandis is a PH stronghold. Comparatively, even the combined votes of BN and PAS in the last GE would not have been sufficient to surpass PH's majority. But considerable time has passed since the GE, with the above factors unfolding in the back of voter's minds, BN should have benefited from a possible increase the anti-establishment vote.

Yet when we look at the results, it seems that vote shares (percentage wise) for non-PH votes actually fell from 44% to 38.2%. This is a clear sign that either PAS or BN (or maybe both) are losing support. This leads to the next question, was the BN strategy, of courting (or attempting to court) the Malay vote using racial issues and fear an effective strategy, did they achieve that objective?

GE 14 and By Election



Above is a simulated result of the breakdown of votes based on ethnicity. In this simulation, we assume that that 90% of the non-Malay votes went to PH, this is a high percentage considering that BN has always had significant support amongst the Indian community.

Yet even with the assumption that 90% of the non-Malay votes went to PH, we can see on the final result that at least 48.5% of the Malay electorate went to PH while BN only secured about 51.5% of the total Malay votes, a difference of only 3% at a time when voter turnout is less than 50%.

In conclusion, **BN's strategy of working with PAS seems faulty.** The current mood is still in strong (and strengthening) favor for PH. Despite PH's increased criticism, in terms of unfulfilled promises, and backtracking of promises, voters seem adamant of refusing a BN that now is continually tainted with scandals and corruption. A merger between PAS and BN will only work in seats of which the Malay electorate is above 90% of the total voters, even then with such a narrow margin, it is still within the swing zone. The honeymoon period for PH is definitely over. But the alternative BN and PAS, both of which are focused on the Malay vote, is still being rejected. It may be time for BN and PAS to ease their Malay centric rhetoric and perhaps focus on the middle ground, one that could potentially win back non-Malay voters. As it stands, and if things remain the same, the next by-elections will produce the same results. A complete turn-around needs to happen either amongst the BN or PAS narrative. Transparency and accountability is the new hope in town whilst racialism is put with the old.

For further detailed analysis, please subscribe to the Centre for Governance and Political Studies.



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