

PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCHERS AT ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE ANALYSE CURRENT EVENTS

Singapore | 8 November 2023

Negeri Sembilan Emerges as PH-BN's Steadiest Stronghold

Kevin Zhang and James Chin*



BN flags “dominate” the entrance of a FELDA settlement in Negeri Sembilan, with PN and PH flags fluttering in the background. Photo taken by Kevin Zhang on 8 August 2023.

* Kevin Zhang is Senior Research Officer at the Malaysia Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. James Chin is Professor of Asian Studies, University of Tasmania. The authors would like to thank Tindak Malaysia for the database of GE2023 (parliamentary election transposed onto state constituencies) and ethnic composition in Negeri Sembilan, Rebecca Neo for her cartographic work, and Francis E. Hutchinson and Lee Hwok Aun for their comments on an earlier draft.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Pakatan Harapan-Barisan Nasional (PH-BN) alliance retained Negeri Sembilan in the August state election, losing only five seats in the 36-seat state assembly to Perikatan Nasional (PN). PH-BN performed the best in Negeri Sembilan among the six states which were up for grabs, even better than Penang and Selangor which are long considered as PH's bastions.
- BN had ruled Negeri Sembilan up till 2018, when it was defeated by PH. The PH-BN alliance was expected to boost the fortunes of both coalitions, with BN drawing support from rural and semi-urban seats while PH capitalised on its urban base.
- BN retained its grassroots machinery in rural seats while PH was almost unassailable in urban seats, contributing to the overwhelming victory in terms of seats won for BN-PH. Nonetheless, PH-BN experienced a sharp fall in vote share from Malays, compared to last year's General Election, while support from non-Malays remained rock solid.
- PN circumvented the lack of credible leadership and grassroots machinery, and instead campaigned mainly through social media, focusing on winning Malay voters. In addition, PN was handicapped by negligible support from non-Malays.
- Both PH and BN need each other to remain in power, since neither coalition fulfils the simple majority of 19 seats in the state assembly. The ability of PH and BN to formulate a mutually satisfactory relationship is crucial for the state administration, and to the federal government moving forward.

INTRODUCTION

Compared to Penang and Selangor, Negeri Sembilan receives far less media and scholarly attention due to its small population size and less-than-stellar economic development.¹ Nonetheless, the state deserves much greater understanding since, in contrast to other states governed by the Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Barisan Nasional (BN) alliance, PH-BN had the most success there fending off the “Green Wave” during the recent August elections involving six Malaysian states. In addition, unlike Penang and Selangor where PH is dominant with BN in the back seat, PH and BN are in approximate parity in Negeri Sembilan.² The roughly equal footing has created constructive and dynamic relations between PH and BN, when faced with the threat posed by Perikatan Nasional (PN). Conversely, PN was least able to make inroads into Negeri Sembilan during the 2023 state election, also known as Pilihan Raya Negeri in Malay (PRN 2023). This piece analyses BN’s long presence in Negeri Sembilan, the rise of PH since 2008, and recent attempts by PN to penetrate the state.

Barisan Nasional (BN) ruled Negeri Sembilan uninterrupted since Malaysia’s independence in 1957 and was virtually impregnable in the state until the 2008 General Election. The east-west differences within Negeri Sembilan enabled PH to rise as a formidable opposition since 2008, while BN retained the state government until 2018, when the Negeri Sembilan state administration witnessed a change of power for the first time, and BN was defeated. The alliance between PH and BN – former long-time nemesis – in the aftermath of the 2022 General Election (GE2022) propelled PH and BN to contest as a joint force in PRN2023 against PN. Many predicted a complete victory for both PH and BN, with PN facing the possibility of a complete wipeout in Negeri Sembilan.³ Yet in PRN 2023, PN managed to win five seats with the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) obtaining three and Malaysian Indigenous United Party (PPBM) securing two. PN managed to make some inroads into Malay majority seats as BN faced declining popularity, but the latter retained some of its historical advantages. Together with rock solid support for PH among non-Malays, PH-BN achieved a trumping majority in terms of seats won. The results analysis section compares PRN2023 against GE2022 voting patterns in the 36 state seats, supplemented with fieldwork conducted in the second week of the campaign period. Together with regression analysis, the piece constructs a picture of how voting patterns have changed among Malays, further segregated into urban, semi-urban and rural state seats.

BACKGROUND

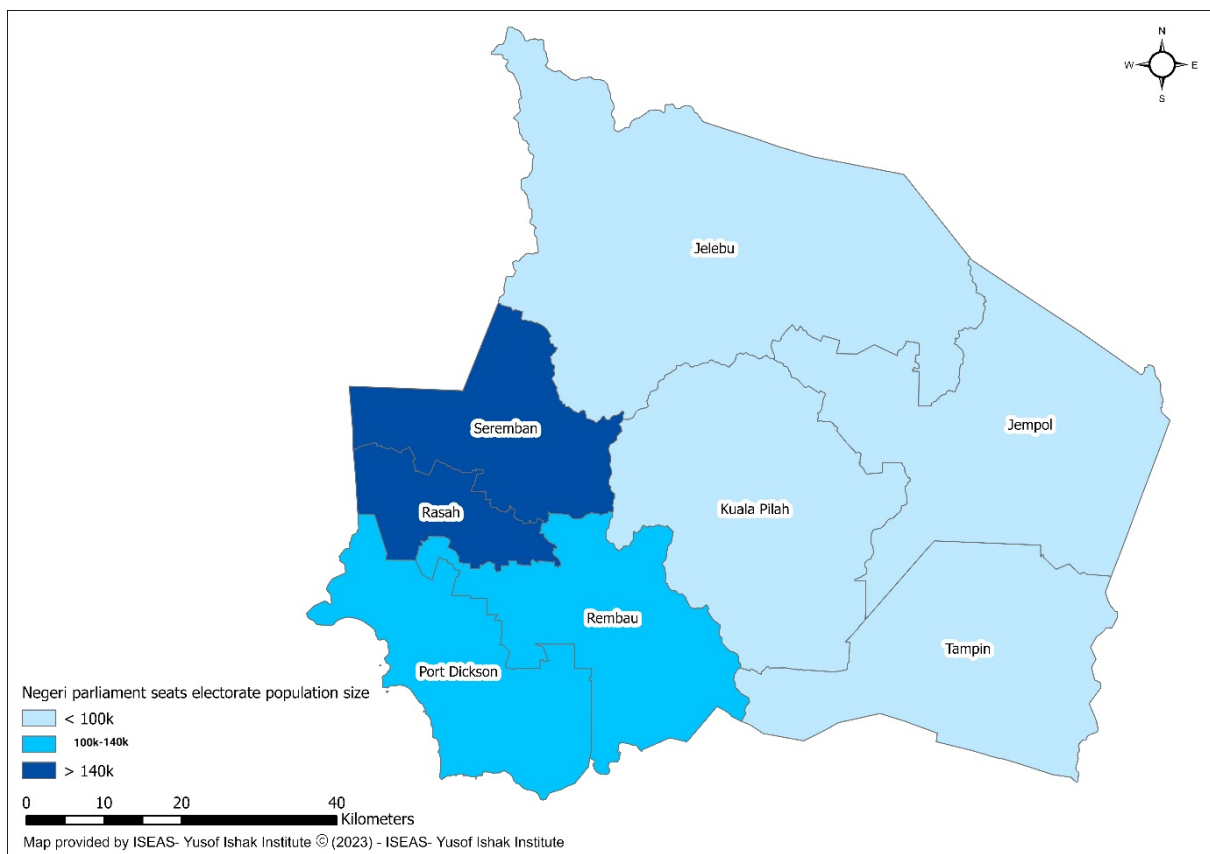
Negeri Sembilan broadly mirrors the national racial demographic with Malays/Bumiputra forming more than half of the state’s 1.1 million residents.⁴ Malays in Negeri Sembilan however possess unique Adat Perpatih heritage which originated from the Minangkabau Highlands in Sumatra, Indonesia.⁵ Much like other west coast states on the Peninsula, the Chinese form a significant percentage at 23 per cent. The state has the highest share of Indians across all Malaysian states, which at 15 per cent is double the national average. Since non-Malay majority seats comprise only 13 of the total 36 state seats, coalitions must win at least a sizeable number of Malay-majority seats to gain control of the state government.

There are eight parliamentary seats in Negeri Sembilan, with the population spread out rather unevenly. (Map 1) The state has seven administrative districts, with district boundaries closely

mirroring their respective parliamentary seats (of the same name) apart from Seremban district.⁶ Rural and semi-urban seats, located in the eastern and central parts of the state, are sparsely populated and have a large land area. Compared to urban seats, rural and semi-urban seats contain far less population per elected assemblyperson due to malapportionment – thereby increasing their political weight.⁷

Agricultural activities remain an economic mainstay with palm oil plantations dominating the landscape. In addition, a sizeable population in rural seats are outstation voters working in larger cities.⁸ On the other hand, the western half of Negeri Sembilan is urbanised with its economy closely intertwined with Kuala Lumpur given its geographical proximity. Apart from being where the state capital is located, Seremban also has the highest economic development and population among all the seven administrative districts. Many Seremban residents travel daily to work in Kuala Lumpur.⁹ In terms of demographic distribution, non-Malays comprise an absolute majority (more than 50 per cent) of total electorate in Seremban, Rasah and Port Dickson parliamentary seats while Malays are dominant in the remaining five seats. The intra-state variation in terms of economic development and racial distribution hold crucial political impact.

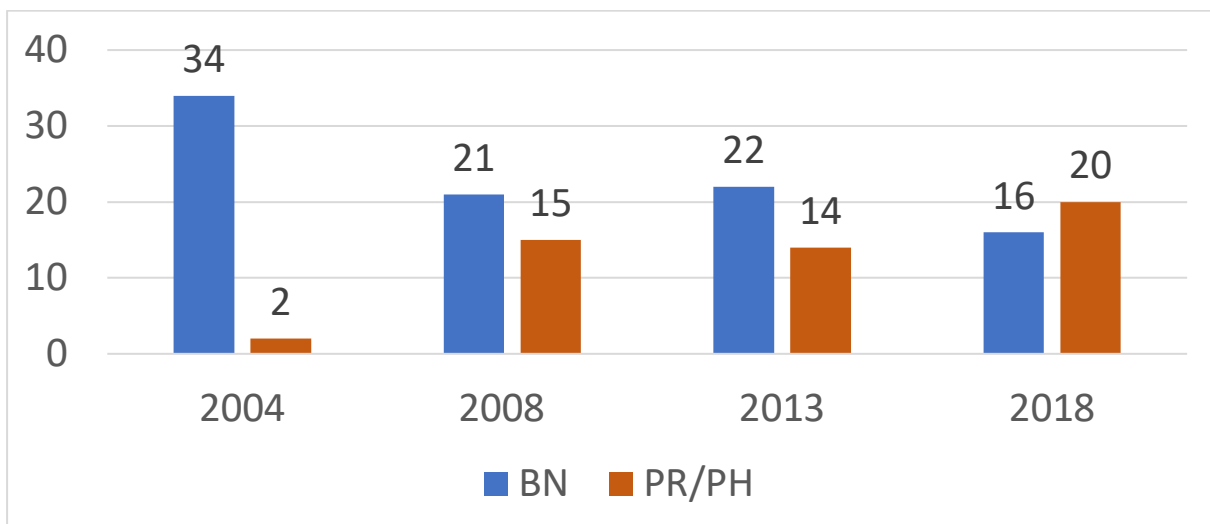
Map 1: Negeri Sembilan parliamentary seats and size of electorate



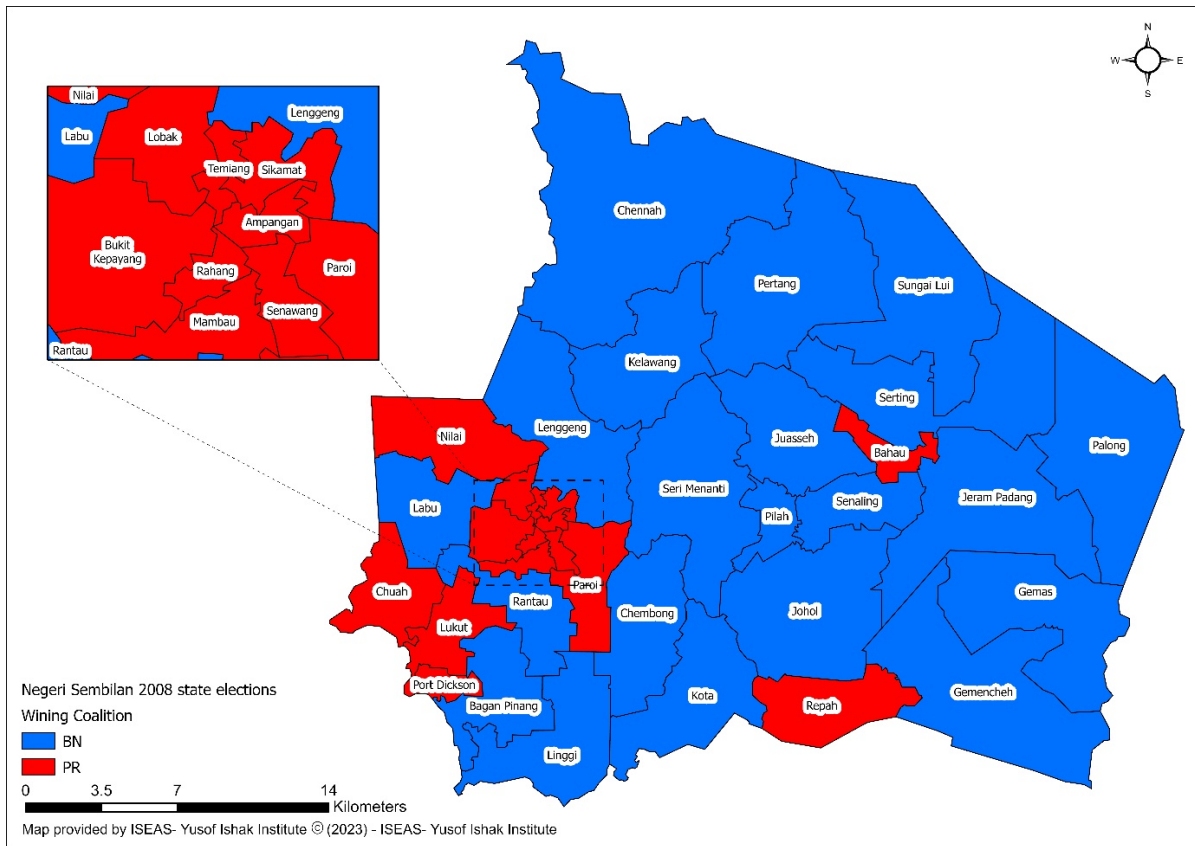
BN AND PH POLITICAL CONTESTATION UP TO 2018

Negeri Sembilan has historically been a BN stronghold, with the coalition ruling the state uninterrupted from 1957 when Malaysia obtained independence to 2018.¹⁰ Up to 2004, the coalition achieved almost a clean sweep by winning 34 out of the 36 state seats. In the 2008 political tsunami which swept through much of the Peninsula’s west coast, the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) – predecessor of PH – made unprecedented inroads into Negeri Sembilan when it won 15 state seats (Table 1).¹¹ The bulk of the PR victories were in urban state seats located within Seremban and Port Dickson districts, on the western flank of Negeri Sembilan (Map 2). Even though the bulk of seats captured by PR were non-Malay majority, it did capture urban Malay supermajority seats (Ampangan and Paroi) located in and around Seremban as well.¹² This indicates that the 2008 tsunami against BN was an urban rather than a racial (non-Malay) wave, with the western half of Negeri Sembilan being an extension of the political sentiments in Klang Valley.¹³ Meanwhile, the central-to-eastern half of Negri Sembilan remained solidly under BN.

Table 1: BN and PH electoral performance in Negeri Sembilan since 2004

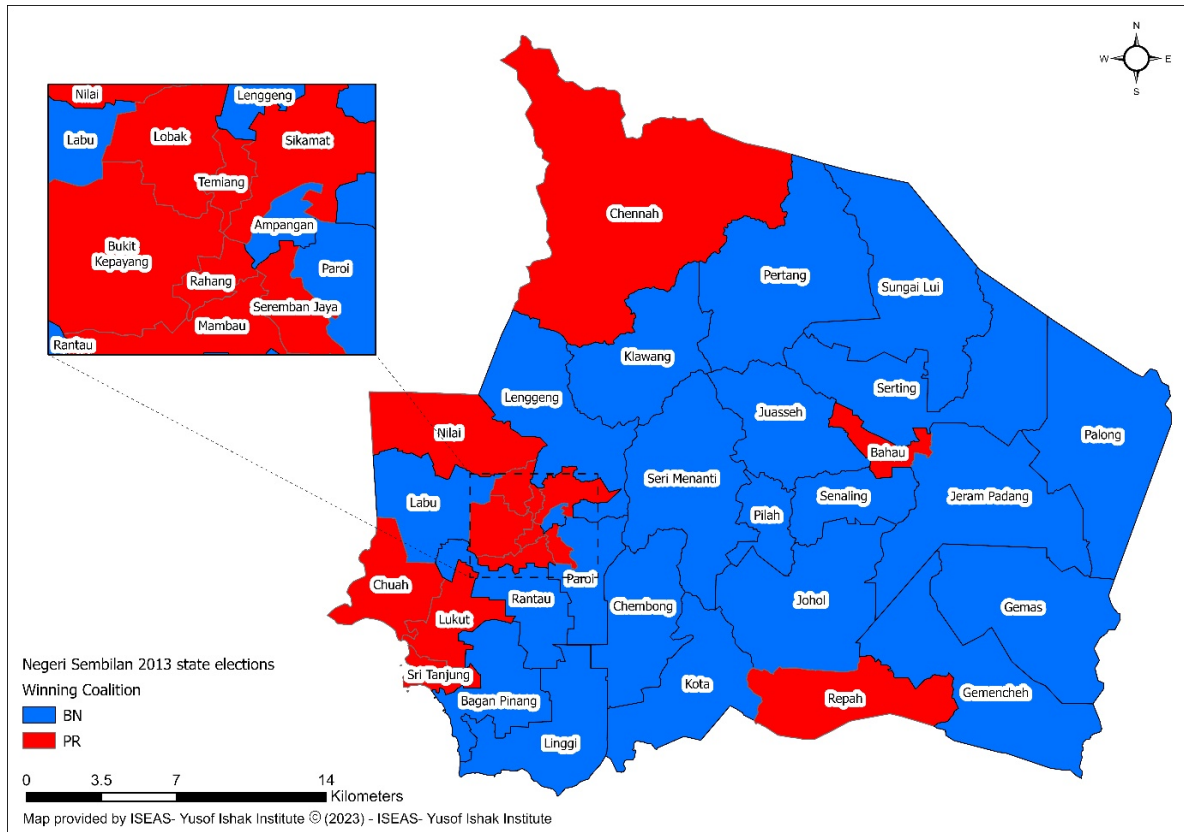


Map 2: 2008 state election in Negeri Sembilan



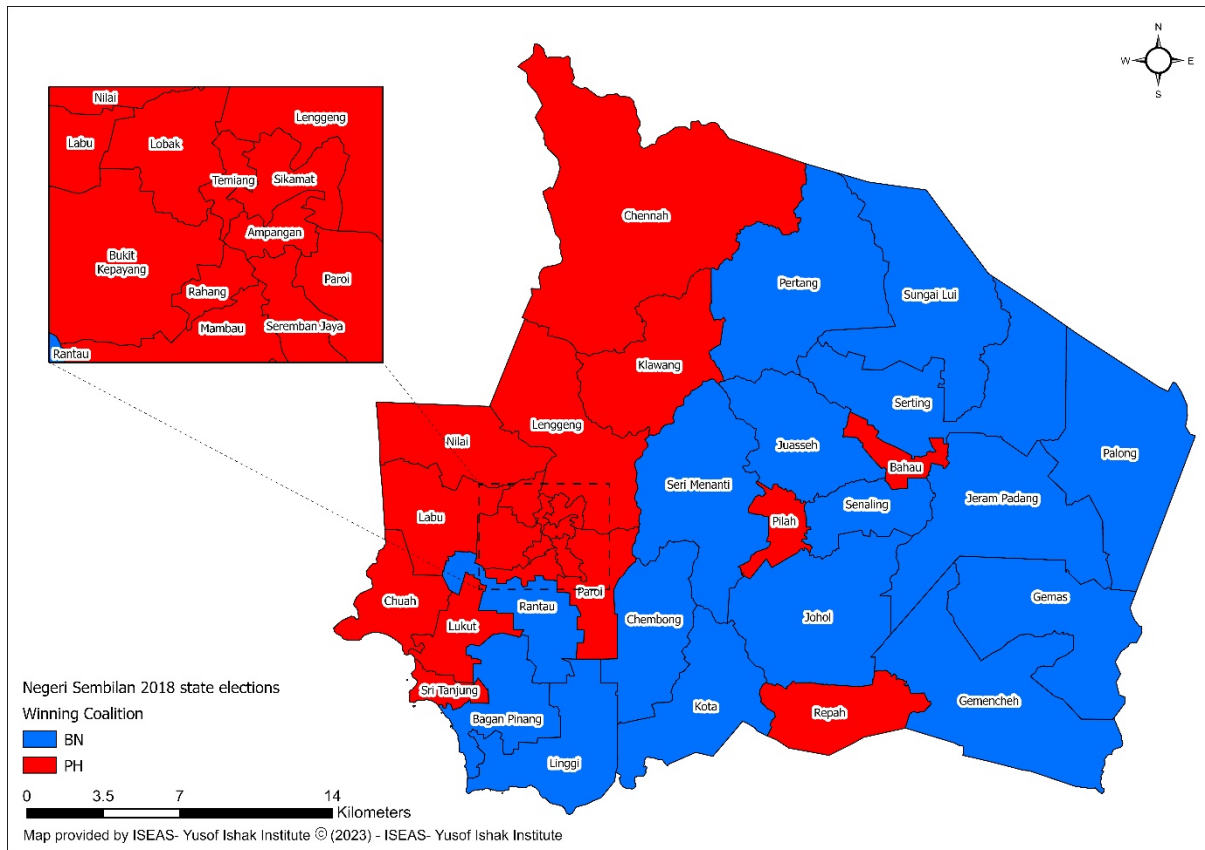
Unlike in Selangor or Penang, the large number of rural and semi-urban state seats in Negeri Sembilan meant that PR could not wrest the state government from BN. This 2008 trend largely persisted in the 2013 general election, though BN managed to claw back urban Malay majority seats while PR gained a rural non-Malay majority seat. (Map 3)

Map 3: 2013 state election in Negeri Sembilan



The nail in the coffin for BN came in 2018, when Malay-majority seats in Seremban district voted against BN – some for the first time – due to widespread anger and disappointment over corruption and the outbreak of 1MDB scandal. For the first time, PH achieved a clean sweep on the western front stretching from Chennah to Sri Tanjung. (Map 4) BN retained their traditional stronghold, albeit with reduced majorities. The crucial swings propelled PH across the simple majority threshold as they won 20 out of the total 36 state seats, forming a new state government.

Map 4: 2018 state election in Negeri Sembilan



SEAT ALLOCATION AND CAMPAIGN FOR THE 2023 STATE ELECTION

By the time the 2023 state election was held, the political scenario had changed completely. BN and PH were now allies as part of the “Unity Government” at the federal level.

After protracted rounds of seat negotiations up to the eleventh hour before nomination day, BN and PH agreed that each coalition would be given the right to contest in the seats which they had previously won in 2018. An exception was made for Lenggeng where PH ceded the seat to BN.¹⁴ The final allocation had PH contesting in 19 seats and BN in 17 seats. The seat negotiation outcome was more favourable for PH component parties than for BN. Since each of the three PH component parties managed to win some seats in 2018, they could contest in the state election. On the other hand, all except one of the 16 seats which BN won in 2018 belonged to UMNO (United Malays National Organisation). The remaining seat (Jeram

Padang) was held by a BN component party. With the Chinese and Indian component parties of BN deciding not to contest in the election, Jeram Padang was ceded to UMNO.¹⁵ With UMNO as the sole party contesting under the BN banner, the election signified the death knell of the multi-racial BN which had once represented the three major racial groups in Malaysia.

PN's strategy for Negeri Sembilan was to divide the core seats between PPBM and PAS, with the "candidate" factor as the most important criterion. Seat allocation was largely based on the principle of "most winnable" candidate.¹⁶ The Malaysian People's Movement Party (Gerakan) was on a "suicide" mission since PN receives negligible support among non-Malays, with Gerakan given the ticket to contest in urban non-Malay majority seats.¹⁷ The final division was PPBM contesting 15 seats, PAS 13 seats and Gerakan six seats.

The quest for PN to take over Negeri Sembilan was dampened by the fact that Ahmad Faizal Azumu, PN state chief for Negeri Sembilan, did not stand as a candidate.¹⁸ Normally, the state chief is also the lead candidate and Chief Minister designate. By not standing as a candidate, voters may have perceived PN as not being serious about capturing the state.¹⁹ The main target of PN's electoral strategy was the Malay-majority seats held by UMNO, with PN being most familiar with the Malay ground, considering that Bersatu brought in sizeable former UMNO members. The theme was largely similar to the national PN theme "Save Islam" and "Save Malays".²⁰

Like the other five states, campaign issues in Negeri Sembilan were largely overshadowed by national issues. Most voters perceived this election as one of national implications relating to the future of Malay and non-Malays rights.²¹ Nevertheless, both sides presented their manifesto. The PH-BN "Negeri Sembilan Unity Aspiration" manifesto, was driven by five targets, 10 main thrusts and 70 initiatives, which included building 4,000 affordable homes within the next five years. PN's manifesto was based on eight pillars: driving economic resilience and addressing the rise in the cost of living; creating sustainable future for the youth; establishing people-centric education and empowering outstanding women; elevating social welfare; strengthening infrastructure and security network; accelerating eco- and culture-based tourism; and enhancing the effectiveness of good governance.

From the manifestos, it was clear that both sides were targeting the young, or first time, voters. The free money promised by PH/BN to the young voters was substantial.

Table 3. Comparison of cash handouts: PH/BN Vs PN²²

| PH/ BN | Perikatan Nasional |
|--|--|
| RM150 voucher for youths aged 16-21 from B40 families to obtain motorcycle licenses | 20 percent school bus fare subsidy |
| RM100 contribution to the National Education Savings scheme for all newborns between 2023 and 2027 | 10 percent birthing cost subsidy or a maximum of RM300 for firstborns under a new Ibu Prihatin Nismilan initiative |
| RM300 one-off assistance for students enrolling in government boarding schools | RM300 subsidy for youths to apply for a B2 motorcycle license |
| One-off university enrolment assistance: RM1,000 (degree); RM750 (diploma); RM500 (certificate) | Up to RM15,000 grant under a million-dollar Young Agropreneurs Fund |
| RM5,000 one-off award for first-class graduates from public universities | RM1mill incubator grant for female entrepreneurs |
| RM500 marriage assistance for the first wedding | |
| RM200 annual donation for single mothers with an income of less than RM2,000 a month | |
| RM200 annual donation for senior citizens aged 70 and above | |

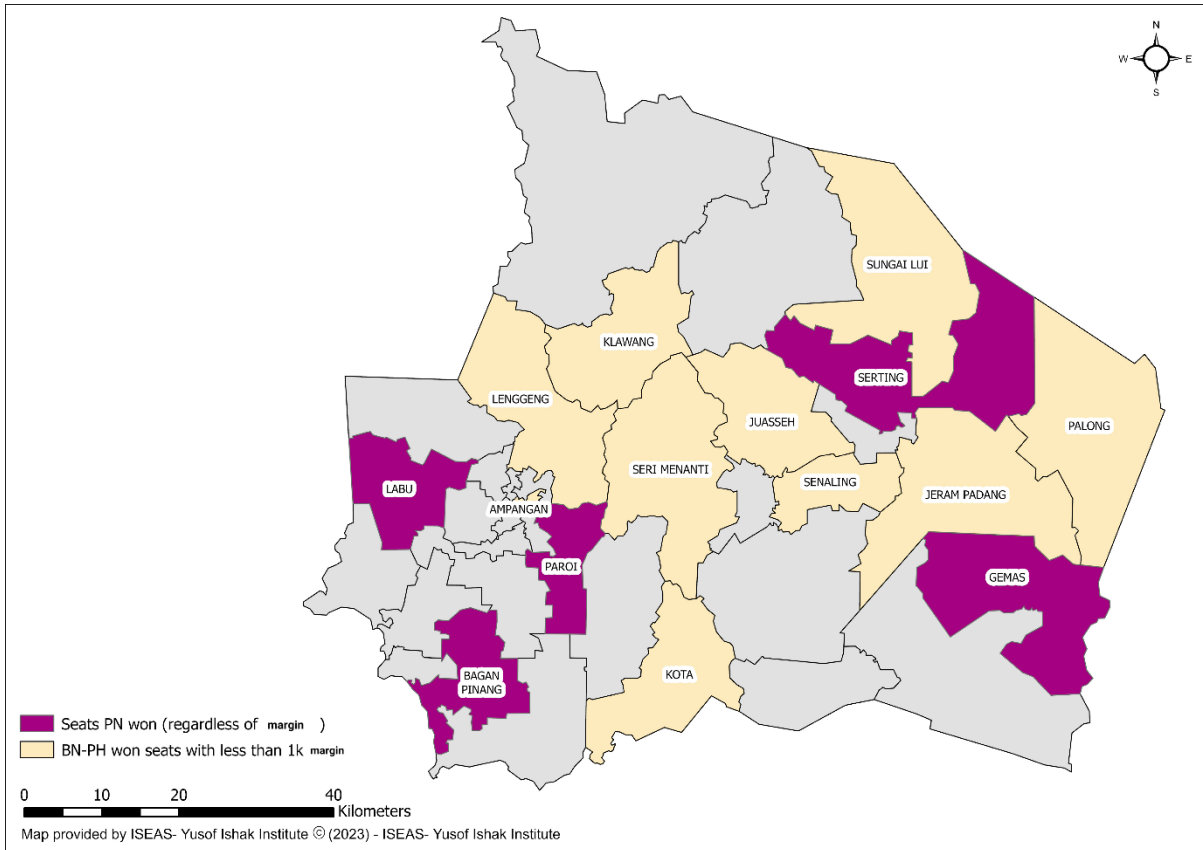
RESULTS ANALYSIS

Overview

Consistent with the general perception that Negeri Sembilan was a tough nut to crack for PN, the media only identified three “hot seats”- Rantau, Klawang, and Juasseh.²³ Other than these three seats, the general consensus was that Negeri Sembilan would be the one state that PN would have difficulty gaining traction.²⁴ After all, there were no PN representatives in the state assembly. In GE2023, Negeri Sembilan was the only state in Peninsula Malaysia where PN had failed to capture even one parliamentary seat. PN also lacked a credible grassroots machinery in Negeri Sembilan and any real state-wide machinery, relying extensively instead on social media for campaigning.²⁵ The two most widely cited opinion polls prior to the PRN, conducted by Merdeka Centre and Ilham, gave PH/BN support at 59% and 47% respectively as the preferred coalition in Negeri Sembilan.²⁶

PH-BN retained 31 of the 36 state seats, while PN won five. None of the “hot seats” saw a change. Rather the five seats that changed hands were: Serting, Labu, Paroi, Bagan Pinang and Gemas. Paroi and Labu were previously held by PH while the remaining three were held by UMNO.(Map 5) All the five seats which PN wrestled from BN or PH had Malays making up close to or more than three-quarters of electorate.

Map 5: 2023 state election in Negeri Sembilan



* Grey shaded areas represent the seats which PH-BN won with more than 1,000 margin of vote

In terms of vote share, PH-BN garnered 60.9 per cent while PN obtained 37.7 per cent.²⁷ With PH and BN joining forces, the alliance avoided a repeat of GE2023 three-cornered fight where the Malay vote was split between PH, BN and PN. With Chinese voters solidly behind PH-BN and PN receiving a negligible share of non-Malay votes, PN’s vote of 37.7 per cent came almost exclusively from the Malays.²⁸ Even though it gained more than a third of total votes casted, PN was severely penalised by the first-past-the-post system with its share of seats (14 per cent) being smaller than its share of votes.

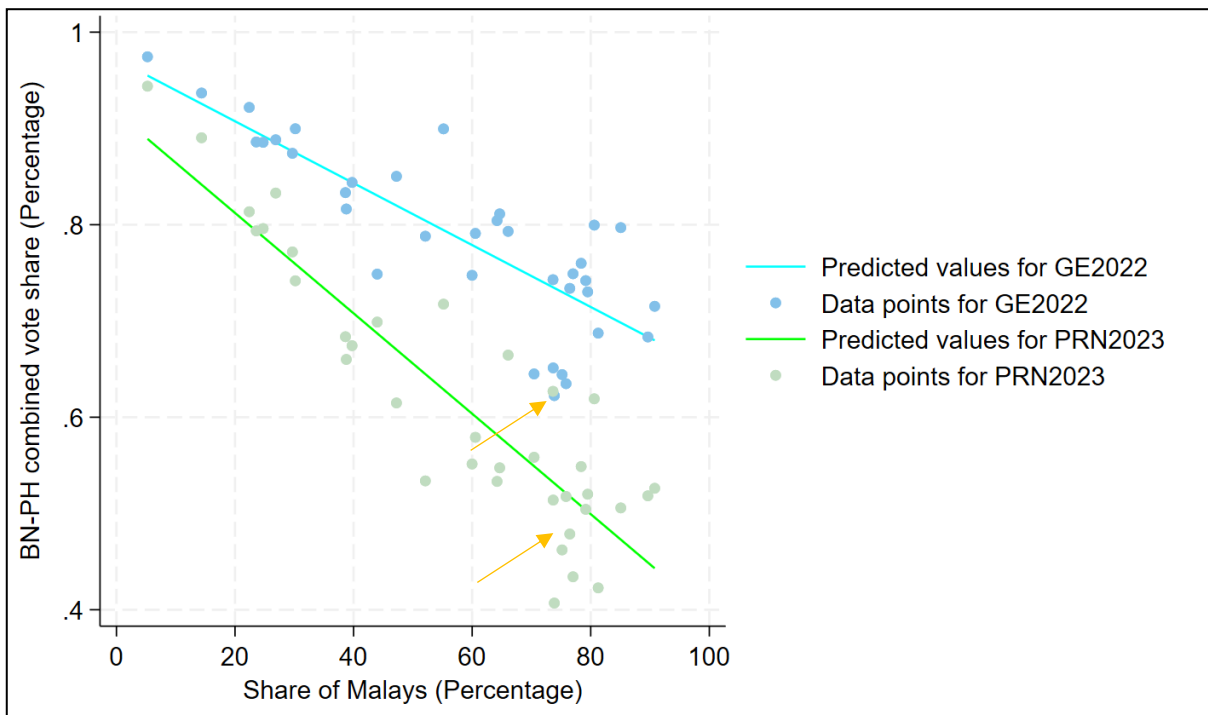
Malay voting patterns in the 2023 state election

Prior to PRN2023, there were predictions being made on the extent of vote transferability between BN and PH supporters for the new PH-BN alliance.²⁹ Considering the deep animosity and contestations, analysts disagreed on the predicted share of BN supporters who would throw

their weight behind BN-PH.³⁰ Since non-Malays were solidly behind PH in previous elections, the focus was on Malay voters who had a choice between PN or BN; both these coalitions share similar narratives of championing Malay rights and Islam, with PN portraying itself as a “clean” alternative. The three-corner fights between BN, PH and PN in GE2022 provide a baseline to measure the extent of vote transferability for BN voters, since BN and PH agreed to support each other in their campaigns for PRN2023.³¹ While admitting that considerations may vary for parliamentary elections (GE2022) versus state elections (PRN2023), the August state election was framed by both PH-BN and PN as a referendum on the popularity of the Anwar’s administration and the PH-BN federal government.³² National-level concerns overshadowed state issues, with the state elections being seen as a rerun of GE2022. The turnout for PRN2023 in Negeri Sembilan was also broadly comparable to GE2022, declining by around five percentage points.³³

Since PH and UMNO joined forces in the state election, the vote share for PH and BN in GE2022 were combined as a reference point against PRN2023. There was a significant decline in the combined vote share of BN-PH, with the decline being steeper in state seats with a larger share of Malays. (Chart 1) The combined vote share for BN and PH voters is estimated to have fallen by around 25 per cent from GE2022 to PRN2023. In PRN2023, the vote share for PH-BN among Malays was estimated to be lower than 50 per cent, indicating that PN was more popular among Malays than BN-PH.

Chart 1: Scatter plot and regression values for PH-BN combined vote share in 2022 and 2023 against the share of Malay electorate



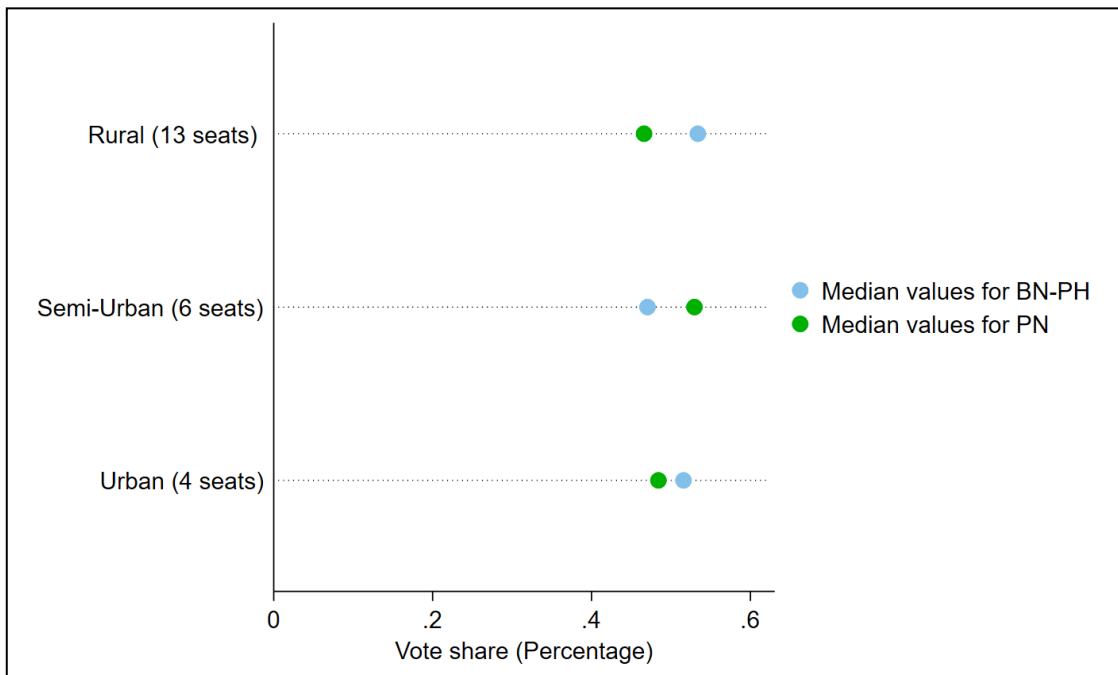
* Each dot represents a state seat in GE2022 (blue) and PRN2023 (forest green). Both regression lines are statistically significant at 0.01 per cent P value.

Nonetheless, ethnicity was not the sole determinant for Malay support for PH-BN since there were significant variations even among seats with a high percentage of Malays. In seats where Malays comprised more than 70 per cent of electorate as indicated by the yellow arrows, support for PH-BN ranged from 40 per cent to more than 60 per cent in PRN2023.

To understand variations in voting patterns among the Malays, the following section concerns state seats where *Malays comprise more than 50 per cent of the electorate* – known as Malay seats for ease of reference. The dot box plot compares PH-BN and PN median vote share in rural, semi-urban and urban Malay seats for PRN2023.(Chart 3)

Commentators have argued that the opposition PN drew its support from the lowest strata of Malaysian society, due to economic discontent with the PH-BN administration.³⁴ With uneven rates of economic growth, rural areas are generally less developed, with PH-BN posited to perform worse in these Malay-dominated areas. However, Negeri Sembilan confounds the notion that PH-BN struggles in rural seats but tends to perform better in semi-urban and urban seats. Instead, BN-PH performed best in rural Malay seats in Negeri Sembilan, with close to a 10 per cent lead over PN, reflected in the gap in chart 3. This was because rural seats have traditionally been the bastion for UMNO, with numerous rural seats in Negeri Sembilan containing large FELDA settlements. Nonetheless, compared to past performance where BN was almost invincible in rural or FELDA seats, BN underperformed.³⁵ According to the author's fieldwork observation, BN relied on its traditional campaign methods of small-scale get-together events and mini-rallies (ceramah) to mobilise support rather than on selling a narrative – in contrast to PN which champions Malay rights and clean governance but lacks machinery and a human touch on the ground. PH-BN had a narrow lead over PN in urban Malay seats, reflected in the small distance in median values. Nonetheless, this remained sufficient to get PH-BN across the finishing line in straight fights against PN. PH-BN performed the worst in semi-urban Malay seats, where PN has almost a 10 per cent lead over BN-PH. Contrary to the trends argued by many commentators, PN's inroads in Negeri Sembilan were in semi-urban and (to a lesser extent) urban Malay seats. None of the five seats PN won were rural; four were semi-urban while one was urban and located within Seremban town.

Chart 2: PH-BN and PN median vote share in Malay seats for 2023 State Election



IMPLICATIONS

While PN – especially PAS – scored a “Green Wave” of unprecedented scale in Kelantan, Terengganu, and Kedah, it failed to capture Selangor, Penang and Negeri Sembilan. PH-BN performed best in Negeri Sembilan with PN only capturing five state seats in PRN2023. Nonetheless, this opens a foothold for PN to challenge PH-BN in the next state and parliamentary elections. With careful allocation of resources and early deployment of “winnable” candidates to seats which PH-BN hold on a narrow majority, PN can be expected to pose a serious challenge in the next round (Map 5). Nonetheless, as seen in 2018 and 2023, national-level sentiments can play a critical role in deciding the outcome of an electoral contest.

The performance of the Negeri Sembilan government – where state cabinet positions are allocated somewhat evenly between BN and PH – will be closely scrutinised. The state will be a test case for whether PH-BN can collaborate successfully. Should the results be positive, there may be pressure for Johor to similarly include PH assemblypersons into the state cabinet, which at present comprises only BN members. Should the collaboration be less than successful however, this will provide ample ammunition for PN in the next state election. Some of the pressing issues concern the lack of development in large parts of the state outside of Seremban, and the absence of affordable and reliable transport options for Seremban residents who commute daily to the Klang Valley.

REFERENCES

Khairy Jamaluddin. 2023. Malaysia’s 2023 Elections: A Coming Clash of Coalitions in Selangor. ISEAS Perspective 2023/61. Singapore: ISEAS.

Ong Kian Ming. 2023a. Malaysia's 2023 State Elections (Part 1): Projections and Scenarios. ISEAS Perspective 2023/52. Singapore: ISEAS.

Ong Kian Ming. 2023b. Malaysia's 2023 State Elections (Part 2): Campaign Strategies and Future Implications. ISEAS Perspective 2023/66. Singapore: ISEAS.

ENDNOTES

¹ There are only eight parliament seats in Negeri Sembilan, translating into a paltry 3 per cent of the total 222 parliament seats. The state also has a significantly smaller GDP compared to Penang and Selangor, ranking number seven in Malaysia in terms of GDP per capita.

² PH has a slight edge over BN in state assembly seats in Negeri Sembilan, at 17 and 14 respectively.

³ In the 2022 general elections, all the eight parliamentary seats were won by either PH or BN. Based on GE2022 results and mapping the voting patterns for parliamentary seats onto state seats, Perikatan Nasional (PN) was not expected to win any of the 36 state seats under a BN-PH alliance with vote pooling.

⁴ Department of Statistics Malaysia,

https://v1.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cone&menu_id=dE1BS2RzYnZFclA3SVhTTS84WDI2UT09.

⁵ Rosiswandy Mohd Salleh. 2017. "Sejarah pengamalan Adat Perpatih di Negeri Sembilan." Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Muzium Malaysia.

⁶ The district of Seremban encompasses Seremban, Rasah and the western half of Rembau parliamentary seat.

⁷ Kai Ostward, "Malaysian elections, malapportionment, and redelineation", *New Mandala*, 28 December 2013, <https://www.newmandala.org/malaysian-elections-malapportionment-and-redelineation/>.

⁸ Author's correspondence with a BN supporter on 8 August 2023 at a palm oil village, with most attendees at the BN rally being middle age or elderly residents.

⁹ Hilmi, Mohamad. "Rail transportation in Kuala Lumpur". *Japan Railway & Transport Review* No. 35 (2023). https://www.ejref.or.jp/jrtr/jrtr35/f21_moh.html.

¹⁰ The Alliance Party – comprising of three race-based component parties – led Malaysia when the country gained independence in 1957. The Alliance Party was reconstituted as Barisan Nasional in 1973.

¹¹ Pakatan Rakyat started out as an informal electoral pact between Democratic Action Party (DAP), People's Justice Party (PKR), and the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) prior to the 2008 General Election. The coalition was formalised after that general election. It was disbanded in 2015 and subsequently reconstituted, now without PAS, as Pakatan Harapan.

¹² Outside of Seremban and Port Dickson administrative districts, PH only won only two state seats (Bahau and Repah), both of which are semi-urban and have a non-Malay majority.

¹³ Author's correspondence with a PH grassroots activist from Negeri Sembilan, 4 August 2023.

¹⁴ "BN contesting 17 seats, including Lenggeng in Negeri Sembilan, says Tok Mat", *Malay Mail*, 15 July 2023, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2023/07/15/bn-contesting-17-seats-including-lenggeng-in-negeri-sembilan-says-tok-mat/79937>.

¹⁵ "MCA, MIC to sit out from state elections", *New Straits Times*, 5 July 2023, <https://www.nst.com.my/news/politics/2023/07/927657/mca-mic-sit-out-state-elections#:~:text=KUALA%20LUMPUR%3A%20After%20a%20disastrous,of%20the%2010%20seats%20contested.>

- ¹⁶ “State Polls: PN seat allocation 95 per cent done – Takiyuddin”, *Astro Awani*, 18 May 2023, <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/state-polls-pn-seat-allocation-95-cent-done-takiyuddin-420150>.
- ¹⁷ Gerakan failed to gain any seat in Negeri Sembilan, and only gained one seat nationally across the six state elections. PN also receive negligible share from the Chinese in Negeri Sembilan, mirroring the national trend (Bridget Welsh, “A (still) divided electorate - Reflections on polls outcome: Part 2”, *Malaysiakini*, 14 August 2023, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/columns/675591>).
- ¹⁸ Kevin Zhang, “Perikatan Nasional Lacks A Game-changing Chief in Negeri Sembilan”, *Fulcrum* 2023/188, 11 August 2023, <https://fulcrum.sg/perikatan-nasional-lacks-a-game-changing-chief-in-negeri-sembilan/>.
- ¹⁹ “Ahmad Faizal Azumu tidak bertanding PRN”, *Utusan Malaysia*, 4 June 2023, <https://www.utusan.com.my/berita/2023/06/ahmad-faizal-azumu-tidak-bertanding-prn/>.
- ²⁰ James Chin (2023) Anwar’s long walk to power: the 2022 Malaysian general elections, *The Round Table*, 112:1, 1-13, DOI: 10.1080/00358533.2023.2165303.
- ²¹ Author’s correspondence with a PH grassroots activist from Negeri Sembilan, 4 August 2023.
- ²² Alyaa Alhadjri, “Comparison of cash handouts in state election manifestos”, *Malaysiakini*, Aug 10, 2023, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/675233>.
- ²³ The “hot seats” turned out to be wrong. All three were won by the incumbent.
- ²⁴ Kevin Zhang, “Negeri Sembilan State Election: A Safe Bet for Anwar Administration?”, *Fulcrum* 2023/183, 8 August 2023, <https://fulcrum.sg/the-negeri-sembilan-state-election-a-safe-bet-for-anwar-administration/>.
- ²⁵ Author’s correspondence with a PAS’ Negeri Sembilan candidate on 6 August 2023.
- ²⁶ Ilham Center, “PRN 2023: Status Quo, Prestasi PH-BN Sukar Dicabar, PN Unggul Di Jajaran Melayu”, 11 August 2023, <https://ilhamcentre.my/report/prn-2023-status-quo-prestasi-ph-bn-sukar-dicabar-pn-unggul-di-jajaran-melayu/>; Merdeka Center, “Malaysia State Elections 2023: Voter Survey Highlights”, 11 August 2023, <https://merdeka.org/malaysia-state-elections-2023-voter-survey-highlights/>.
- ²⁷ MUDA and other independents failed to create a significant impact, garnering a miniscule share of votes.
- ²⁸ Bridget Welsh, “Bridget’s Kerusi Panas episode 9: Negeri Sembilan, Sungai Liu and Gemas”, 7 August, <https://bridgetwelsh.com/video/bridgets-kerusi-panas-episode-9-negeri-sembilan-sungai-liu-and-gemas/>.
- ²⁹ Shathana Kasinathan, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2023/07/27/khairy-not-impossible-perikatan-could-take-selangor-with-swing-in-malay-vote-dip-in-non-malay-turnout/82101>, *Malay Mail*, 27 July 2023, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2023/07/27/khairy-not-impossible-perikatan-could-take-selangor-with-swing-in-malay-vote-dip-in-non-malay-turnout/82101>.
- ³⁰ See Ong Kian Ming’s piece and a survey conducted by Marzuki Mohamad (Marzuki Mohamad and Khairul Syakirin Zulkifli. 2023. Why Perikatan Nasional May Win in Selangor. ISEAS Perspective 2023/50. Singapore: ISEAS).
- ³¹ Each Malaysian electorate is assigned to a polling station, and a state seat contains numerous polling stations. On average, there are between four to five state seats for each parliamentary seat in Negeri Sembilan. Obviously, it would be invalid to assume that GE2022 voting patterns for parliamentary seats could be applied uniformly across the state seats within its boundaries. To ensure accuracy, votes from each polling station in GE2022 are tabulated and assigned to their respective state seats.
- ³² [Ahmad Mustakim Zulkifli](https://www.malaysianow.com/news/2023/08/12/test-of-support-as-bn-ph-face-off-with-pn-at-state-polls), “Referendum for BN-PH in face-off with PN at state polls”, *Malaysia Now*, 12 August 2023, <https://www.malaysianow.com/news/2023/08/12/test-of-support-as-bn-ph-face-off-with-pn-at-state-polls>.
- ³³ A regression analysis was done where the change in turnout for each seat was regressed against its share of Malays. The result was not statistically significant, indicating that the 5 percent decline in turnout cannot be attributed to non-Malays being less inclined to vote compared to Malays.

³⁴ Shannon Teoh, “Malaysia’s poorest voted for opposition, signalling discontent with economy”, *The Straits Times*, 28 September 2023, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-s-poorest-voted-for-opposition-signalling-discontent-with-economy>.

³⁵ Kevin Zhang, *ibid.*

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>ISEAS Perspective is published electronically by: ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute</p> <p>30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119614 Main Tel: (65) 6778 0955 Main Fax: (65) 6778 1735</p> <p>Get Involved with ISEAS. Please click here: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/support/get-involved-with-iseas/</p> | <p>ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute accepts no responsibility for facts presented and views expressed.</p> <p>Responsibility rests exclusively with the individual author or authors. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission.</p> <p>© Copyright is held by the author or authors of each article.</p> | <p>Editorial Chairman: Choi Shing Kwok</p> <p>Editorial Advisor: Tan Chin Tiong</p> <p>Editorial Committee: Terence Chong, Cassey Lee, Norshahril Saat, and Hoang Thi Ha</p> <p>Managing Editor: Ooi Kee Beng</p> <p>Editors: William Choong, Lee Poh Onn, Lee Sue-Ann, and Ng Kah Meng</p> <p>Comments are welcome and may be sent to the author(s).</p> |
|--|---|---|