

Media Statement by Dr. Ong Kian Ming on the 2026 Johor State Election Results

Pakatan Harapan, and especially DAP leaders, seem to be in continued denial over the causes of the Johor state election results – PH in danger of losing all but one of the 15 parliament seat it won in the 2022 General Elections

After the landslide victory by the Barisan Nasional (BN) in Johor where it won 48 out of 56 state seats (85%) with a popular vote of almost 60%, the reaction of Pakatan Harapan (PH), especially DAP leaders, seem to reflect a state of continued denial with very little admission of what went wrong in a disastrous campaign for the coalition.

When I first projected a landslide victory for the BN in Johor¹, about one week into the campaign, this projection was met by scepticism among some PH leaders. Fahmi Fadzil, the multimedia and communications Minister, said that “He has a right to his opinion, but it is incorrect and far from reality”.² While my initial projection of 53 seats for the BN was not correct, I do not think it was “far from reality”. In an interview with the Star Online, which was recorded on the 2nd of July 2026, I predicted that BN would win between 45 to 50 seats, which was more accurate.³

The early response from some DAP leaders do not indicate, at least not publicly, that they have learned crucial lessons from the Johor polls. DAP Secretary General, Anthony Loke, while stating the fact that many of the votes which went to Perikatan Nasional (PN) in the 2022 state and federal elections were “transferred” to the BN in this state election, did not bring up why PH failed to win or even make a play for the PN votes, which were presumably up for play. In addition, he failed to take note of the fact that the support for PH fell by 10% when compared to the 2022 General Election, which should be PH’s frame of reference, especially if it wants to retain the 15 parliament seats it won in GE15.⁴ (Table 1 below)

Table 1: BN, PH and PN Support in PRN 2022, GE2022 and PRN 2026

Support	PRN 2022	GE 2022	PRN 2026	Change PRN2022 to GE2022	Change GE2022 to PRN 2026
BN %	43.2	30.1	59.7	-13.1	29.6
PH %	26.4	42.6	32.6	16.3	-10.0
PN %	24.2	26.1	5.4	1.9	-20.6

In addition, even though the DAP managed to retain 6 out of the 10 seats which it was the incumbent, its vote share dropped from 61.2% in GE2022 to 50.8% in PRN 2026, representing a drop of 10.4%. This drop in support cannot be attribute to PN’s vote “transfer” to BN but a reflection of the drop in support for PH and the DAP. (See Table 2 below)

¹ [BN's odds of landslide win in Johor rising, says Kian Ming](#)

² [PH dismisses Ong Kian Ming's forecast of BN landslide in Johor](#)

³ [Johor Votes: The 2026 State Election Breakdown with Ong Kian Ming | Poll Position - YouTube](#)

⁴ This 15 includes the seat won by Syed Saddiq in Muar.

Table 2: Change in DAP support in 10 seats where the DAP was the incumbent

StateCode	Seat Name	DAP% (GE2022)	DAP% (PRN2026)	ChangeDAP%(GE2022toPRN2026)
N2	Jementah	54.9	42.9	-12.00
N10	Tangkak	54.6	43.6	-11.03
N12	Bentayan	66.3	64.1	- 2.19
N23	Penggaram	61.8	54.6	- 7.19
N28	Mengkibol	64.8	54.9	- 9.95
N42	Johor Jaya	55.1	42.9	- 12.20
N45	Stulang	56.0	47.3	- 8.66
N46	Perling	61.7	46.6	- 15.09
N48	Skudai	71.3	58.7	- 12.57
N52	Senai	65.2	52.1	- 13.15
	Average	61.2	50.8	- 10.4

Tony Pua, in a Facebook posting⁵, said that DAP's performance was "Not great. But Credible". In same FB post, he said that BERSAMA was a "spoiler" in some seats which caused the DAP to lose the Perling state seat, for example. For this point, he was called out and criticized by many of the two thousand or so comments, mostly in English (at the time of writing). There was absolutely no introspection as to why these voters chose to vote for BERSAMA or why DAP failed to retain four state seats, including the Perling state seat.

DAP Johor state chief and Kulai MP came closest to admitting mistakes and shortcomings of the campaign in Johor in her FB post⁶ but this wasn't enough to stop many of the negative comments in response to this post, in different languages.

What went wrong for PH and the DAP

There were a few things which PH and the DAP got wrong in this campaign. These include the following:

- (i) Lack of a coherent campaign narrative

Before even the campaign began, PH already started off on the wrong foot by calling BN "betrayers" or "pengkhianat" for deciding to contest on its own in the Johor state elections during a heated PH convention on the 17th of May 2026. The PH state chief, Aminolhuda Hasan, who opted not to contest in the Johor state polls, even stated that PH would "bury" or "kuburkan" BN in Johor for the 2nd time.⁷ This kind of attacking mindset, perhaps not suitable for a state elections in a place like Johor, where voters value a more practical and policy minded approach towards governing, would plague PH during the entire campaign, including Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim calling the

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Cmk2RHdDa/>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1DAtishKdm/>

⁷ [PH akan 'kuburkan' BN kali kedua di Johor - Aminolhuda - Sinar Harian](#)

Johor Menteri Besar candidate (then), Onn Hafiz, “kurang cerdik” or “not very clever” during one of his campaign speeches.⁸ The delay in launching the PH manifesto, one week after BN had already launched theirs, and with no clear spokesperson to explain the manifesto to the public, allowed BN to label the PH manifesto as a “copy and paste” version of the BN manifesto. The attempt, particularly by the DAP, to say that a vote for BN is a vote for PAS, and to bring to link the Johor campaign to the possible royal pardon (or house arrest) of former Prime Minister, Najib Razak, looked increasingly desperate towards the last days of the campaign and obviously did not work. In other words, the entire PH campaign in Johor was a “hot mess” compared to the disciplined campaign of BN, led by Onn Hafiz, and ably backed up by Khairy Jamaluddin during his campaign for various BN candidates in the state.⁹

(ii) Lack of coordination among the PH parties

During the campaign, I was receiving images and posters via WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram of various ceramahs being organized by Pakatan Harapan across different constituencies in Johor. What became clear to me was that each PH component party was running their own party campaign in Johor rather than running a coordinate PH campaign. For example, most of the ceramahs in seats contested by the DAP featured mostly DAP speakers. Even in seats like Jementah (part of the Segamat parliament constituency, with a PKR MP), Penggeram (part of the Batu Pahat parliament seat, with a PKR MP), Johor Jaya (part of the Pasir Gudang parliament seat, with a PKR MP) and Perling (part of the Pulai parliament seat, with an AMANAH MP), I did not see much the presence of the respective MPs for these constituencies in the ceramahs or the walkabouts organized by the DAP. Perhaps they were busy campaigning for their respective parties in other constituencies, but the outcome was that PH was not properly coordinating its campaign.

(iii) Lack of self-awareness, especially among certain DAP leaders

In the interview on the Star Online, I said that the BN had two poster boys in the Johor campaign. Other than Onn Hafiz, DAP Deputy National Chairman, Nga Kor Ming. Nga, in an exclusive interview with Oriental Daily, a Chinese language new outlet, said that he would resign from cabinet if BN won big in Johor and former PM Najib is freed. This not only allowed BN leaders, including UMNO Deputy President and Malaysia’s foreign minister, Mohamad Hassan, to urge Nga to resign even before polling day¹⁰, but also made this a campaign theme for the Malay voters to come out and vote against PH and to vote for BN.

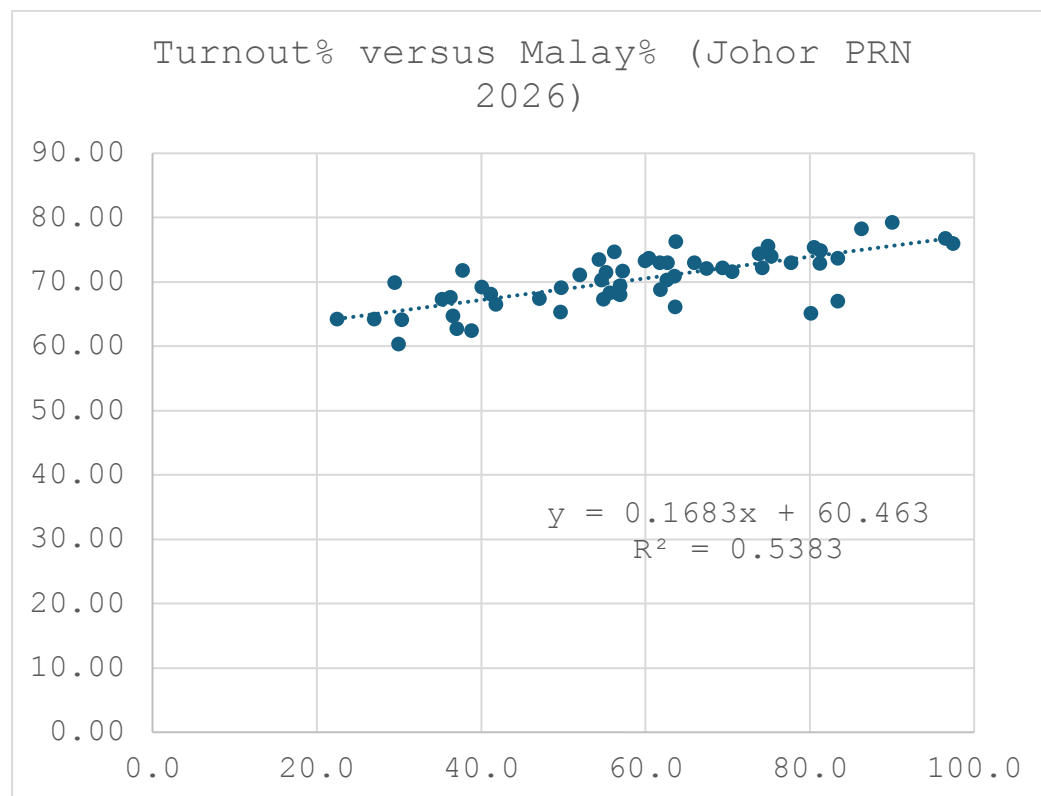
⁸ [‘Tak cerdik, tak berterima kasih’ – Anwar bidas tindakan Onn Hafiz bangkit isu JS-SEZ](#)

⁹ Khairy explained why it was not appropriate for Onn Hafiz to debate Maszlee Malik as the latter had not even been named as the MB candidate for PH. Khairy also explained that the decision to give Najib a royal pardon was and is in the hands of the King and had nothing to do with the outcome of the state elections.

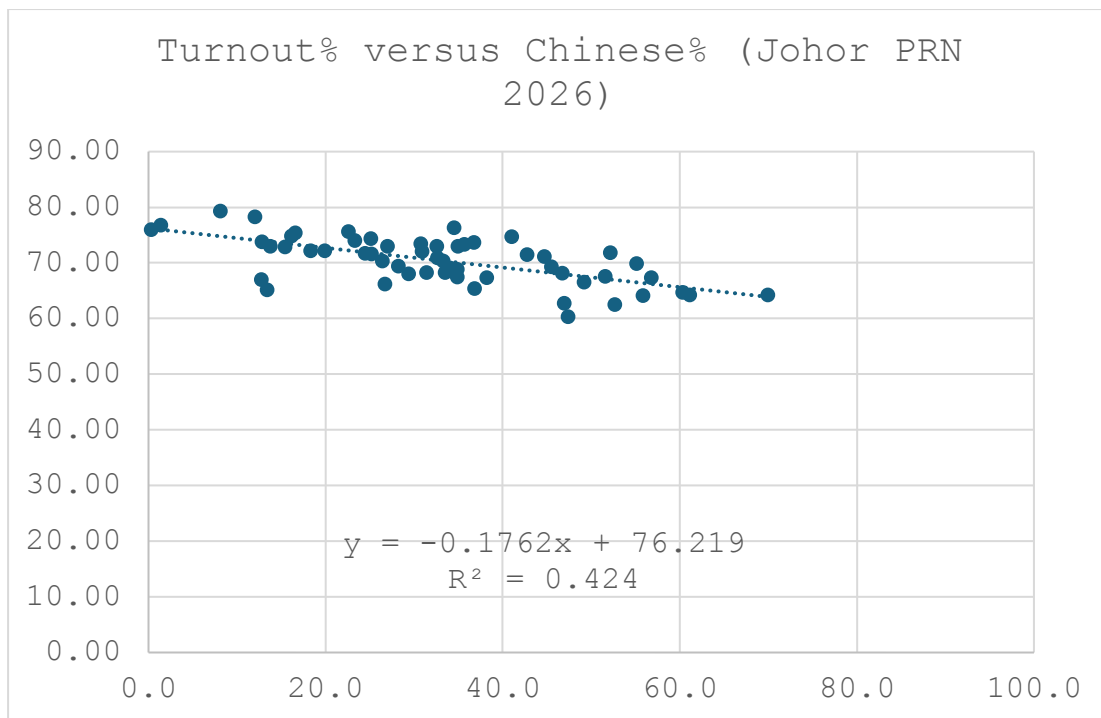
¹⁰ [Alhamdulillah, go ahead and resign — UMNO’s Tok Mat calls Nga Kor Ming’s bluff ahead of Johor state election](#)

To a lesser extent, the remarks by Tony Pua, before and during the Johor campaign, on the pig rearing issue and later the LRT3 issue in Selangor, seemingly directed against the Sultan of Selangor, also provided ammunition to BN and PN cybertroopers to use this issue to galvanize the Malay voters to swing their support behind BN in Johor.

I do not have conclusive survey data to support this view but one of the reasons why I think the Malay voter turnout in the Johor state elections, estimated at 77%, was much higher than the Chinese voter turnout, estimated at 58%, was because the Malay voters were much more motivated to turn out to vote against the DAP and PH (and in support of the BN) compared to the Chinese voters, who did not have a compelling reason to come out to vote for PH.



Estimated Malay turnout = 77%



Estimated Chinese turnout = 58%

I am making an educated guess that the anti-DAP which led to an anti-PH swing resulted in the Malay support swinging back strongly to the BN with an estimated 85% of Malay support in the Johor state elections.

While the Chinese support for the DAP and PH remained above 50%, estimated at a maximum of 80% overall (but much less in seats like Paloh and Yong Peng which were won easily by the MCA incumbents), this is a reduction of at least 15% compared to the 95% support received by PH in the 2022 general elections.

Sadly, many DAP leaders don't realize that what they say in the ceramahs in their own constituencies will affect the Malay sentiment in other constituencies including those contested by PKR and Amanah which are mixed and Malay majority. DAP may have defended 6 of the 10 seats it won in the 2022 state elections in Johor, but at what cost, especially to its coalition partners?

(iv) Losing the moral high ground (what little was left)

One of the incidents which were reported during the final days of the campaign was when two DAP campaigners, Ong Hui Xue (special officer to Wong Kah Woh, Deputy Education Minister) and David Tiang (special officer to Nga Kor Ming, Housing and Local Government Minister) were caught on video hanging a banner with the title "Bebas Najib" next to the billboard of Li Tiang Soon (or "Ah Soon"), the BN-MCA candidate for Yong Peng.¹¹

¹¹ (11) Rf Lias - Dapat maklumat salah seorang yang gantung banner "Bebas... | Facebook



What really shocked me was when Wong Kah Woh not only defended the two DAP campaigners for putting up this banner during a campaign speech in Yong Peng but that the two campaigners were called on stage by Howard Lee, the MP for Ipoh Timor, so that they could be applauded and congratulated by the crowd of DAP supporters!¹² The DAP I joined back in 2012 would have criticized BN for hanging banners demonizing Lim Kit Siang for being anti-Islam during elections time, for example, and would have lambasted any BN candidate for asking their campaigners who hung such banners to go on stage to be applauded and congratulated! To me, this was the moment when the DAP lost any moral high ground that it may have had, including on the 1MDB issue. (And this is after the revelation by former DAP Skudai ADUN that a senior DAP leader who had been campaigning hard against Najib on the 1MBD issue also told her to expect Najib to be pardoned eventually, in a very matter of fact way).

(v) Loss of trust towards PH among Indian voters

I do not have access to the detailed saluran results for Johor which would reveal more distinct voting patterns among the Indian community but the anecdotal sharing by former Klang MP, Charles Santiago, that the Indian voters are “angry, not disappointed” with PH when meeting leaders and voters among the Indian community in Johor are telling.¹³ The fact that the DAP lost badly in Paloh, a seat with 15% Indian voters, and lost Perling, a previously safe seat with 13% Indian voters, should be an indication that

¹² [\(11\) Facebook](#) (Reel showing Howard Lee praising the two campaigners after they were called on stage)

¹³ [Charles walks into 'inferno' with Indian leaders when stumping for Harapan](#)

the Indian voters have defected from PH in larger numbers in Johor. This is a reflection of a much larger national trend where there is no clear narrative from PH on its deliverables to the Indian community, despite numerous declarations and campaign manifesto promises in the past.

What applies to the national and what doesn't

Of course, there are some trends in Johor that doesn't apply to national sentiment and to other states. This is what some PH and DAP leaders have and will continue to say. Khalid Samad, from AMANAH, after the Johor results were announced, said that PH still has the advantage at the federal level because Anwar Ibrahim is a better PM candidate than whatever BN has to offer. While this may be the case if we take the latest Merdeka Center polls as an indication, would PH be confident of retaining the same number of seats which it won in GE15 (PH won 82 parliament seats in 2022) if a general election were to be triggered before the end of 2026?

Yes, BN doesn't have Onn Hafiz as a poster boy in states other than Johor, but does PH have someone close to the stature and popularity of Khairy Jamaluddin at the national level, who has higher approval ratings among Malay respondents than Anwar Ibrahim in the recent Merdeka Center polls?¹⁴ While KJ may not be the BN's candidate for Prime Minister, he has shown in Johor that he can be a very effective campaigner, perhaps more effective than Anwar himself.

Even if we restrict BN's popularity to Johor, a translation of the Johor state elections to the parliament seats shows that BN would go from winning the nine seats it won in GE15 to winning 25 out of 26 parliament seats in Johor including winning 14 out of the 15 PH seats¹⁵ with PH only winning the parliament seat of Bakri.¹⁶ Of course, PH leaders can say that they would fare better in a general election compared to a state election but this remains to be seen as other factors could come into play in a GE that would continue to disadvantage PH including lower turnout rates among PH supporters.

What are the implications for the NS state elections?

BN should not be overconfident and expect the same kind of result in the upcoming Negeri Sembilan state elections. They do not have the same kinds of advantages such as having a popular MB candidate like Onn Hafiz. It is also not the incumbent state government and PH, by virtue of being the incumbent, should be able to run a more coherent and disciplined campaign.

What may continue to apply in NS is the loss of confidence and support among the Malay voters towards PH as well as continued implicit and explicit support for the BN by PAS. It is too early to say whether this will be sufficient for BN to retake Negeri

¹⁴ <https://merdeka.org/anwar-remains-malaysias-most-popular-leader-with-khairy-close-behind-as-economy-tops-voter-concerns-merdeka-center-survey-finds-2/>

¹⁵ This includes the parliament seat of Muar, won by Syed Saddiq of MUDA.

¹⁶ This includes two seats won by BERSATU in GE15, namely Pagoh and Mersing.

Sembilan. But what is clear is that another wake-up call has been issued to PH and particularly to the DAP. I am not confident that the DAP leaders have woken up yet.

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