The Voting Trend of the Parliamentary By-Elections After the Malaysian 12th General Election

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Abstract
The 12th Malaysian General Election held on 8th March 2008 had ended with the ruling coalition, the National Front, suffering a rather humiliating defeat that it never experienced before. For the first time since independence, the party failed to secure the two-thirds majority in the parliament and lost the control of five states out of thirteen states that formed the Federation of Malaysia. The significant factor that determined the triumph of the opposition front was the role played by Anwar Ibrahim. In the March election, however, Anwar was barred from standing as a candidate due to legal provision after being convicted and jailed for a sodomy case, which he termed political conspiracy against him. Following an allegation that Anwar was involved in a new sodomy case with his close aide his wife Wan Azizah, the president of the Justice Party, decided to vacate the parliamentary seat in Permatang Pauh to pave the way for Anwar to contest. The result of the by-election proved that the support for the opposition was growing and the former Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi was blamed for the continuous decline of the ruling coaliton. This phenomenon led him to step down as the prime minister to pave the way for his deputy Mohd. Najib Razak to take over. After the Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election, there were two more parliamentary by-elections in Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Gantang. The results of these by-elections clearly have shown that the opposition is maintaining the momentum in the run up to the 13th general election scheduled for 2012/13. This paper explores how the changing scenarios, shown by the three parliamentary by-elections will likely to determine the future political landscape of Malaysia prior to the next general election.

Keywords: Malaysian politics, Electoral Geography, Electoral Behaviour

Introduction
After the 12th Malaysian General Election there were three parliamentary by-elections which showed some indications on the possible political trend in Malaysia on the run up to the 13th General Election scheduled at the latest in early 2013. The three by-elections were in Permatang Pauh, Kuala Terengganu and Bukit Gantang. The Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election was held following the resignation of Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, the President of Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) or People's Justice Party as a member of parliament of the constituency to pave the way for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to become its new member of parliament. In Kuala Terengganu, the by-election was held following the death of Dato' Razali Ismail on 28th November 2008 of Barisan Nasional (BN) or National Front. Similarly, the Bukit Gantang