



Malaysia Opposition Wins Crucial Seat In By-Election

Malaysia's opposition PAS defeated the ruling coalition in a by-election Tuesday to retain the Permatang Pasir state seat in Penang state, Singapore TV station Channel NewsAsia reported on its Web site.

It said the seat, the only one held by the PAS in Penang, was originally occupied by an assemblyman who died. PAS is part of a three-party Pakatan Rakyat alliance that also includes the Democratic Action Party, and former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's Keadilan.

Channel NewsAsia cited Malaysia' Bernama news agency as saying PAS won the seat with a 4,551-vote majority.

"This is a very important by-election, most importantly it will be a bellwether for the opposition," Bridget Welsh, a Southeast Asia expert from the Singapore Management University, said in an earlier Agence France-Presse report. "For the opposition, the worst case scenario is that their majority will be very low. That will create tensions in Pakatan, and questions over Anwar's leadership."