SUNGAI PETANI: In facing the 14th general election, Kedah UMNO and Barisan Nasional (BN) need to get out of their comfort zone by fielding candidates favoured by the people if they want to continue helming the state.

Universiti Utara Malaysia’s senior lecturer in Political and International Affairs, Md Shukri Shuib said he personally observed that the wave of public support for UMNO/BN still prevailed despite the party’s internal conflict which seemed to be not over yet.

“UMNO and PAS have the most number of branches in Kedah, but public confidence in PAS is shaky due to its internal problems although it had ruled Kedah before.

“Therefore, the chances of UMNO/BN remaining as the state government are still there but they need to field candidates who are acceptable to the grassroots and community at large, as the people would want leaders who really can represent them.”

Md Shukri said this when met by Bernama at the Kedah Information Department’s programme with its strategic partners, at Jeti Semeling Cafe, here, Tuesday.

According to him, the issue of candidates would be a major element in GE14 but UMNO and other BN component party members at all levels should be open-minded and open-hearted in the matter of selection of candidates.

“If UMNO/BN can revolutionise and change their criteria in selecting candidates, giving priority to likable and winnable candidates, and not candidates merely favoured by the party leaders, this could be key to UMNO/BN winning in GE14.

“I believe the UMNO/BN top leaders are looking into this matter but internally, the candidates chosen must also be ensured of victory within the party,” he said.

Md Shukri also said that the Kedah state administration under the leadership of Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah was seen as less hit by sensational issues. – Bernama