

# Longhouse residents

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“*E*ti nuan ari Pas kami endak ngenendar nuan masuk!” (If you are from Pas we will not allow you to enter). An Iban Tuai Rumah (longhouse chief) had this to say to a *Borneo Post* reporter in Sadong Jaya on Saturday.

Sadong Jaya, a Muslimdominated constituency, is one of the three seats eyed by Pas in tomorrow’s Sarawak polls.

Apparently Pas, making its debut in Sarawak, has got off on the wrong footing. Its campaigners have been banned from longhouses in Sadong Jaya for bringing its aggressive campaign tactics to Sarawak.

The longhouse residents are furious with Pas supporters because they had called the Sarawak Malays *kafir* (infidels) on nomination day when Barisan Nasional and Pas members engaged in an heated exchange of words at the nomination centre in Sadong Jaya. Pas is also contesting two other seats Beting Maro and Samariang.

In this election, the 868,487 voters will cast their ballots to elect the remaining 58 representatives to the 62-member State legislative assembly (Council Negeri). Four seats have already been won uncontested by the BN.

Pas and Parti Keadilan Nasional are known for their gung-ho politics. Their members had even instilled fear among BN voters and kept them away from balloting centres during the Nov 29 Lunas by-election where Keadilan’s Saifuddin Nasution won with a narrow majority of 530.

“We are sad that these two pm-tics have brought along with them their violent culture which they propagate in the pen-

**The Barisan Nasional looks set to return to power in tomorrow’s Eighth Sarawak State election although the Opposition may perform better. The record number of independents may have an effect on the results. ASHRAF ABDULLAH looks at the possibilities**

insula,” Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said during his one-day campaign trail for the BN last night.

Like in the past seven elections, the Sarawak RN looks set to be returned to power with a two-thirds majority.

But this election sees many firsts. It is the first time Pas, Keadilan and the State Reform Party are contesting the State election.

The number of Independents contesting the election is also unprecedented. Some 63 Independent candidates, most of whom are said to be aligned to the former Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu deputy chief Datuk Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha, are contesting election.

Some quarters claim that the group led by Abang Abu Bakar was being backed by Umno, although the party has categorically denied it.

Some political observers argue that it will be an uphill task for Pas, DAP and Keadilan to secure seats in the election.

This is especially so because the marriage of convenience between DAP and Pas came to an abrupt end on Sunday when the former decided to leave the opposition coalition in a bitter disagreement over the Islamic state issue.

Although Keadilan’s election director Azmin Ali claims that DAP’s decision to leave the party will have little impact on Keadilan in the State election, the move by many members in Miri to leave the party (Keadilan) for the BN, was reflective of their utter disappointment.

Keadilan is contesting 25 seats while Pas three. The DAP is trying its luck in 13 constituencies.

With DAP leaving the coalition, there will certainly be a split among DAP, Pas and Keadilan supporters. DAP will be challenged by Keadilan in Tanjung Datu and Pending while Pas and Keadilan will take each other on in Samariang.

But while some politicians see the DAP-Pas split as a disaster for the two, others see it as a ploy to garner sympathy votes in tomorrow’s election.

“This is only *wayang kulit*. They (DAP) will join the coalition again,” said SUPP president Tan Sri Dr George Chan who added that this was DAP’s tactics to fish for sympathy votes.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakoh shares the same view.

He said the people of Sarawak should be wary of DAP’s tactics as the party could have an hidden agenda.