

**Tenang: 'Barang naik' the early focus for Pakatan
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Pakatan Rakyat launched its first wave of attacks on the BN in Tenang with the recent hikes in prices of essential goods, blaming the federal government for its failure to manage the economy.

The sharp rise in prices of essential goods, fuel, food and beverages has become a hot topic in almost all Pakatan's ceramah (political forums), statements and even in leaflets.

Johor DAP launched a leafleting campaign early this month. It printed two versions of political leaflets, with the first one slamming the government decision to back the construction of the RM5 billion 100-storey mega-tower in Kuala Lumpur, and the second one focusing on Johor's water tariff, the highest among all states.

Johor DAP also held a "bread-eating" session on Jan 2 on the main street of Labis town, showcasing a 0.6m-tall sliced bread tower.

"We cannot afford to eat cake because it is getting more and more expensive, instead we eat ordinary bread to voice our protest," said Johor DAP Youth chief Tan Hong Pin, who organised the event, referring to the cake party called late last year by the 1M Malaysians Reject 100-storey Mega Tower Facebook group.

Tan said their next message would focus on the ailing Johor economy.

According to him, the southern state had chalked up RM1.2 billion of debt and the state investment arm Johor Corp would not be able to service its multi-billion ringgit bond due next year.

"The bond is guaranteed by Johor state government. This means the state government may go bankrupt next year," Tan added.

Movie screening to expose 1Malaysia

Besides leafleting and ceramah sessions, DAP is also adopting a more creative approach in this state seat by-election which has been fixed for Jan 30.

It will organise a public screening of the acclaimed local Mandarin movie, Ice Kacang Puppy Love, in Tenang tomorrow.

"We want to expose the hypocrisy of 1Malaysia. Non-Malay local movies are facing discrimination," explained Tan.

The movie had earlier been denied the 20 percent entertainment tax rebate given to local productions because it was classified as "a foreign movie" by the authority on the grounds that less than 60 percent of the movie script was in Malay.

Although the government later adjusted its policy to accommodate all local movies regardless of language for the tax rebate, it was not backdated to benefit Ice Kacang Puppy

Love.

The DAP campaign machinery is currently led by the Johor state committee, helmed by Skudai assemblyperson Dr Boo Cheng Hau. The party central machinery, which brought about the 'Sibu miracle', is yet to move into the constituency.

Special task force to monitor abuse

Meanwhile, PAS will capitalise on both national and local issues to convince the 14,753 voters to vote for the Pakatan candidate. Top on the list is also the price hikes of basic goods.

On local issues, PAS by-election operations director Dzulkefly Ahmad claimed that the second generation of Felda settlers and Malay traditional settlement areas were facing housing problems.

"There is ample government land in Labis, but only those close to the Umno leadership are entitled to it."

PAS is currently recruiting more campaigners and establishing campaigning committees for all the 12 polling districts with the help of DAP and PKR.

"At the same time, we are also organising ordinary political activities, such as ceramah and meet-the-people sessions," Dzulkefly said when contacted.

The party has set up a special task force to monitor the participation of government agencies in BN's campaign trail.

"We heard there were abuses of government machinery by BN, including the use of Felda, Kemas (Community Development Department) and the religious department. We are monitoring them closely," said Dzulkefly.

Malaysiakini reported last week that Johor Education Department director Markom Giran had openly canvassed for support for BN among teachers.

Video footage of Markom making his call has been uploaded on YouTube, in which the Johor education chief asks the teachers present "to help the government to win the by-election in this round".

Following this, PAS had lodged a police report against the senior government servant.