

Polls abuses: PAS wants to bring BN to book
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PAS went on a full offensive today, outlining a string of legal challenges and a staging peaceful protest against claims of abuses and corruption practised by BN in the Kerdau by-election campaign.

The Islamist party intends to file at least one lawsuit against two pro-government television stations, apart from filing a police report on alleged bribery in the Felda settlements and handing over a memorandum to the Election Commission listing out PAS' grievances in this contest.

Persatuan Anak Felda Kebangsaan (Anak) president Mazlan Aliman (left) said a police report would be filed this afternoon against Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan for allegedly bribing Felda settlers to vote for BN come polling day this Sunday.

Mazlan cited news reports today that quoted Ahmad as saying that 260 Felda settlers in Kerdau would receive cash payouts of RM13,000 in outstanding cess payments on Monday.

"He (Ahmad) said they can only give the cess payments after the polls, as it would be an election offence to give the money now. But this money is owed to the people," Mazlan said at PAS' daily press conference at its operations centre.

"Considering this, and the RM4,000 payout from the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) to the settlers in Kerdau, it is clear BN is desperate to dig out as many votes as it can from Felda Jengka."

There are three Felda settlements under the Kerdau state constituency - Felda Jengka 22, 23 and 25 - and together with the sole Felcra settlement there, the area accounts for one-third of the 8,999 registered voters.

Mazlan also accused Ahmad of using the cess payout to influence Kerdau's Felda voters, as it was clear the promise was made only to them and not to those in any other Felda settlement outside the constituency.

"The offer is strange, because the settlers in Felda Tersang 2 (in Raub) did not get their payout from MPOB. The excuse given to them was that MPOB ran out of money.

"How is it then that MPOB can pay settlers in Kerdau? If you want to give (money), why not give to all (settlers)? This clearly shows that this is bribery," he claimed.

'BN playing dirty'

Mazlan also claimed that Ahmad, who is the minister in charge of Felda, has launched a silent campaign in the three settlements, sending in 200 "special officers" to infiltrate Pakatan operation centres to collect information and convince voters to support BN.

He claimed that Ahmad personally handpicked the officers, who are allegedly given a RM2,000 allowance to dress up like PAS members and plant themselves deep into Felda

territory.

"These officers wear kopiah (skull caps), have beards like PAS (members), and make themselves presentable to the settlers. We know that these officers have taken up lodging with the settlers, and that Special Branch officers are monitoring their progress to make sure they are doing their jobs," he said.

Mazlan added that Felda officers have also been dispatched in full force to meet with each and every settler and convince them to take the RM13,000 payout promised by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak during his visit to the areas last Sunday.

"They try and convince the settlers, Makcik, ambil la duit ni (do take the money, aunty), but they don't tell them of the conditions set.

"This is dangerous because if they take the RM13,000, they will have to pay back RM650 a month for 20 years. This means settlers will have to pay more than RM150,000 over that period, and this option is dishonesty on the part of the government," he said, adding that Anak was getting legal help on how the settlers could avoid paying the monthly instalment.

Anak will also organise a peaceful protest. in front of the Felda Jengka 22 management office tomorrow morning, to present a memorandum to the management to protest the BN's alleged abuse of Felda facilities, which he claimed have been turned into BN operations centres.

'That was not what I meant'

Earlier, PAS vice-president Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said he was consulting legal experts on the possibility of filing a suit against government-run broadcaster RTM and private television station TV3 for misrepresenting a statement he made in the early days of the Kerdu campaign.

He claimed that the two stations only played a sound bite of him saying in Malay that Kerdu's voters "don't need religion", which is far removed from what his full statement meant.

"What I meant in my entire statement was that based on the situation in Kerdu, the voters need a candidate who is a professional and not a so much with a religious background.

I did not say that Kerdu's voters don't need religion... cutting out most of my statement and just playing that one bit on television is a misrepresentation of what I said," he said.

Tuan Ibrahim (right) said PAS would also present a memorandum to the EC this afternoon, to convey the party's disappointment over the commission's inaction over the many alleged abuses and corrupt practices employed by BN in the Kerdu campaign.

"The failure by the EC (to take action) carries big implications. If this continues, the people's faith in democratic practices will be eroded," he said, adding that PAS will push for a second Bersih rally to be held before the next general election.\