

BN to discuss GE dry run on Friday
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The BN supreme council is to meet on Friday to discuss plans to hold a nationwide polls dry run in preparation for the 13th general election.

Umno has already discussed the issue at length, with plans in place to have its own dry run in July to work out kinks in its election machinery, its secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor said today.

"When we will have snap polls we don't know. That we will leave to God and the prime minister... but plans for a dry run will be discussed when the BN supreme council meets this Friday," Tengku Adnan, who is also BN secretary-general, told a press conference.

He acknowledged that certain issues have plagued BN's campaign machinery based on its performance in the recent Sarawak election and the numerous by-elections since 2008, but he did not go into the details.

"We see what happened in Sarawak, in Batu Sapi, in Johor and all the by-elections we've gone through; we are trying to ease certain machinery that did not perform as we liked," he said.

"Umno has plans (for) its own machinery, and we will have it most probably in July. For BN, it is not yet confirmed, but it will involve all component parties."

On the proposed dry run to prepare for Umno's polls scheduled for 2013, Tengku Adnan said that this is already going on, with training being continuously carried out at division level.

He said the party's powerful management committee, chaired by deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin, has submitted a proposal to president and premier Najib Abdul Razak for one person to take charge of the dry run.

However, Tengku Adnan declined to reveal the person's identity, saying Najib's approval was pending.

'Umno up to task'

He admitted that Umno would face some major challenges when the the new voting system is implemented at the next party polls, particularly in terms of logistics.

"We will have over 140,000 delegates from 191 divisions (who are eligible to vote). We have been getting feedback, (that) big divisions are going to have difficulty managing the extra four to five delegates (from each branch).

"If you have 100 branches (in a division), that means an extra 400-500 people. We understand the logistics will be tough, but we have to follow this as the Registrar of Societies has already approved the amendments... we need to find a way to overcome the logistics issue."

Tengku Adnan brushed aside concerns that Umno may face troubles similar to those that plagued rival PKR during its polls late last year, during which numerous complaints of vote-rigging and physical fights were reported.

"We are different from PKR. PKR is not a structured party; they cannot even come up with their list of members at the division level," he replied.

"Umno, MCA, MIC, PPP and Gerakan are all structured and we keep our lists with us... we don't understand their (PKR) system, and I believe (the Umno polls) won't face what has happened in PKR."

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