

PKR gears up for snap polls, machinery activated

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While a July date for snap polls remains speculative PKR is not taking any chances as it began getting battle ready should the 13th general election actually take place in the next few weeks.

The opposition party held a two-day retreat in Port Dickson for its top leadership and political bureau members with special attention focused on its nationwide polls campaign.

Vice-president Tian Chua said the retreat - which ended yesterday - is the start of the party's push to complete their polls preparations before July.

"The retreat centred on policy issues such as our (campaign) machinery, training of election volunteers, our website and mobilisation," he said when contacted.

Tian Chua was sparse on details surrounding the two-day retreat, though he did not disagree when asked if the top leadership will now embark on a state to state tour to get their party machinery up to speed.

"Definitely, part of our preparation is to consolidate (the party machinery) in every state," the Batu MP said, without revealing much else.

Fellow vice-president Fuziah Salleh was equally tight-lipped on the retreat, playing down its significance by describing it as a "regular" political bureau meeting.

"This was not the first time we discussed the general election at our meetings. This was just an extended meeting of our regular political bureau meetings.

"We went through and updated our checklist, basically making our final checks so that we are prepared, considering that snap polls could be called as early as July," she said.

Anwar's non-stop schedule

Inside information, however, indicates that the retreat was a culmination of months of effort aimed at getting the party's machinery at both the national and state levels geared up for snap polls.

A source close to the party's top echelon revealed that there was more than one reason behind PKR de facto chief Anwar Ibrahim's nationwide anti-slander campaign, which followed the expose of a sex video allegedly involving a man resembling the charismatic leader.

Though stopping short of confirming Anwar's tour doubled as training for the party's machinery in each state he visited, the source admitted that it was more than just prepping the ceramah circuit for their leader.

"His (Anwar's) schedule has been non-stop over the past few months, and everywhere he went the state machinery would be mobilised... you gauge for yourself," the source said.

It is also understood that PKR leaders from Sabah and Sarawak attended the two-day retreat, fuelling speculation that seat negotiations were raised.

This appears to go hand in hand with claims that the main Pakatan Rakyat partners - PKR, DAP and PAS - have already started negotiating about seats in case the general election is called this year.

Anwar himself fanned such speculations when he told Malaysiakini in an exclusive interview that he expects snap polls to be called as early as August this year.

However, if the general election is to be called this year, Pakatan-led Selangor and Penang have vowed not to dissolve their assemblies as their governments have only been in power for a little over three years.

This will allow Pakatan to focus on the parliamentary election instead of having to defend these two key states as well.

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