

PKR confab to stab at the heart of Umno
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PKR hopes its national congress in Johor next weekend will help to spread the influence of the party and Pakatan Rakyat in the state, long known to be an Umno stronghold.

Secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (left) said the past seven party congresses in other states had produced this effect and hoped the same would happen in Johor.

"If you look at the party's history, we have held the congress mainly in the Klang Valley, Selangor, Penang, Kedah, Perak and Kelantan, where PKR and Pakatan have improved their strengths.

"We hope this congress at Pulai Springs (in Kulai) beginning on Nov 25 will result in PKR and Pakatan making inroads in Johor, which is an Umno bastion," he said.

Saifuddin said Johor's response to PKR and Pakatan had been overwhelming and that was why the party chose to hold the meeting there.

Saifuddin said there will be 2,534 delegates and 1,055 registered observers attending the congress.

Independent and international observers from civil society groups, distinguished individuals, and foreign party observers have also been invited.

Election mode

Saifuddin said the theme of the congress is Demi Rakyat (for the people).

"It is to highlight the achievements of the four Pakatan states and how we have been successful and maintain a corruption-free administration.

"It gives us an opportunity to show the people of Johor the contrast between states held by Pakatan and BN."

Saifuddin added the focus of the meeting was to coordinate and strengthen the party machinery for the coming 13th general election.

The congress will highlight issues of good governance, and the scandals of the BN government, including the one engulfing the National Feedlot Corporation.

"The congress starts on the 25th, but from the 24th to 27th, party leaders will tour Johor and have meet-the-people sessions to allow them to get to know the party better," he said.

Seat negotiations not ended

Saifuddin said negotiations for parliamentary and state seats between PKR and other Pakatan Rakyat party components of PAS and DAP have yet to be completed.

"It is nearing completion but there are some areas where negotiations are still going on," he said.

Saifuddin declined to estimate how many seats PKR and Pakatan could win in Johor. "This involves party strategy and we cannot divulge details," he said.

He said another aim would be towards retaining the four Pakatan-held states.

Quizzed on the registration of Pakatan, he said the onus was on the Registrar of Societies (RoS).

Zaid Ibrahim was then pro-tem chairman and had submitted Pakatan's original application under his name in 2009. But he later left the party.

"We submitted a new application after Tumpat MP Kamarudin Jaafar replaced Zaid. We are still waiting for the RoS to respond."

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