

## **'Phantom voters' will determine outcome of GE13**

**Malaysiakini.com**

**Disember 13 ,2011**

**By Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

The strength of the Umno-BN political will and the speed of implementing all the recommendations of the parliamentary select committee (PSC) on electoral reform will determine the outcome of the next general election.

forum pru13 undi siapa jadi penentu 131211 stage 02Saying this today, PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar noted that the results of the 1999 and 2008 general elections were largely decided by the Malay and Chinese voters respectively.

However, she believes that the outcome of the next general election would not hinge on any ethnic group.

She was speaking at a forum in Shah Alam organised by Malay daily Sinar Harian, entitled '13th General Election: Whose Votes Will Decide?'

The Lembah Pantai MP called on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to carry out all the PSC's recommendations passed by the Parliament as these were the people's aspirations.

"They will become 'political pirates' if the 13th general election is called without implementation of the recommendations promised in the document, which has been passed by the Parliament.

forum pru13 undi siapa jadi penentu 131211 audience"If it is a clean election, we will accept whatever the result, whether victory or defeat," Nurul Izzah added.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng echoed her views and drew a round of laughter when he said that the determinant of the next general election will be "phantom voters".

"If we don't talk about ghosts, we'll be haunted by an election result that does not reflect the will of the people," Lim said.

"If the PSC recommendations are not implemented, it will be very dangerous."

Lim, who is Penang chief minister, stressed that if the "phantom voters" were caught, the kingmakers would be the voters in Sabah and Sarawak.

"They will determine if we can get the miracle number - 112 (for a parliamentary majority)," he said.

Nurul and Lim were on a five-member panel that also comprised Umno supreme council member and Deputy Higher Education Minister Saifuddin Abdullah, Parti Kita chief Zaid Ibrahim and Universiti Malaya media studies lecturer Prof Abu Hassan Hasbullah.

At a press conference called after the forum, Lim elaborated that Pakatan Rakyat must secure at least one-third of the total parliamentary seats in Sabah and Sarawak for the coalition to take over Putrajaya.

However, Saifuddin was of the view that BN still stood a better chance in the next general election based on three factors:

- \* Voters who had cast protest votes against BN in the 2008 general election have returned to the ruling coalition;

- \* Those who supported BN in the last election will continue to do so and their numbers will increase; and

- \* "New reality voters" and youths from minority ethnic groups are more likely to support Najib compared with other opposition leaders, according to two surveys done by the International Islamic University (UIA)

and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) respectively.

According to Saifuddin, the "new reality voters" are those who have new social awareness, understand democratic transformation and embrace the new media, and most of them consist of young voters.

"In my humble opinion, BN still has a bright chance (in the next general election)," he concluded.

forum pru13 undi siapa jadi penentu 131211 abu hassan 02On the other hand, Abu Hassan (left) called on voters to "work together for change" and give Pakatan a chance as BN has ruled the nation for almost 60 years.

"In the process of a civilisation, we never worry that a party falls and is replaced by others."

Zaid, who was jeered by the audience when introduced by the moderator, urged the voters to strengthen the opposition in the next general polls.

He said while Kita is still a small party which may not have the capacity to contest, the party will throw its support behind Pakatan.

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