

Expect BN defections to Pakatan, forum told
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Some defections are expected among elected representatives after the general election if the BN government's strength is rocked further.

Speaking at a Centre for Public Policy Studies forum in Bangsar yesterday, Gerakan Youth chief Lim Si Pin (right) said this is a "likelihood" if BN loses more seats in the peninsula.

"Politics is about survival, yours as an MP as well as your party. The likelihood of (MPs) joining a new coalition is there when the number of seats won by BN in the peninsula makes it less than able to be a stable government," he said.

According to Lim, defections in such a situation will be seen among Sabah and Sarawak politicians.

"One cannot treat Sabah and Sarawak as fixed deposits, there are no more strongholds in Malaysia. Everyone is out to save their own butt, especially someone in Sarawak," he said.

Agreeing with him was fellow panelist political scientist Ong Kian Ming who said "the hunt for frogs will continue" if either side wins with less than 55 percent of the seats, or a margin of no more than 22 seats.

As such, a defection of 11 MPs will bring about a change of power.

Calculating crossover figures

"The issue is relevant if either coalitions wins with less than 55 percent. If Pakatan wins majority seats in the peninsula then you will see the non-PBB representatives in Sarawak and the non-Umno representatives in Sabah being tempted to cross over.

"If BN wins, you'll see peninsula MPs (from Pakatan) being courted by the ruling coalition. Anwar learnt his Sept 16 lesson and won't try aggressively if BN is more stable with 65 to 70 percent of the parliament seats," Ong (left) said.

He added that internal strife in Umno, in the event DPM Muhyiddin Yassin challenges Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's leadership may also be used to tempt individuals.

Earlier, Lim had crossed political boundaries to speak on behalf of Pakatan MPs serving in Kuala Lumpur, whom he said are being victimised as they do not get federal government allocations to serve their constituencies.

He also empathised with PKR vice-president Tian Chua who defeated him in Batu in 2008, whom he said, "doesn't get support from DBKL".

"Everything surrounds DBKL, roads, signboards, traffic lights...so if we don't get accountable local councils, how do we answer our voters?" he said, backing the calls for local government elections.

Speaking bluntly, Lim also called for "transformation" within BN, advising Pakatan not to repeat the ruling coalition's mistakes if it ever comes into power.

Why Gerakan won't quit BN

"We are a coalition government but when it comes to issues... only one person makes the decision and

not the coalition as a whole.

"If Pakatan comes to power, don't let one single party dictate how the government is run. Please have more consensus... don't be dictated by one or two ministers," he said.

When asked by a member of the audience of about 30 people why Gerakan is still in the BN despite these misgivings, Lim said that it is unfair to suggest that a BN founding member quit.

"The first person Tun Razak met to moot the idea was (the late) Lim Chong Eu (then Penang chief minister). Why should Gerakan leave the BN? Why shouldn't other parties leave?

"The one who should be leaving is the one who did not play by the rules of the BN as it was envisaged in 1974. I won't name who, but in 1974, the rule was one party, one vote," he said.

Another forum participant was Bar Council Human Rights Committee chairperson Andrew Khoo who questioned the legitimacy of a government elected by only about 30 percent of the eligible population.

"People say you get the government you deserve. If you allow 30 percent decide who is in power, you have a question of legitimacy. Have they been authorised to govern?" he asked.

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