

We're ready for November polls, says Pakatan

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By Hafiz Yatim

At their meeting today, secretaries of Pakatan Rakyat component parties were also of the opinion that the 13th general election could be called in November, as the premier has hinted.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali said Pakatan has been preparing for the election since 2011, and that preparation was now 100 percent complete.

"Yes, Pakatan agrees that the signs indicate November polls at the earliest, if not next year," he said.

"It does not mean that BN... will win big, as history has proven otherwise."

The BN in 1999 called the general election in November, following an uproar among the Malay community after Anwar Ibrahim's sacking and charges of sodomy and abuse of power against him. The BN then lost Kelantan and Terengganu to PAS.

Also present today were Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli, DAP's Teresa Kok and Anthony Loke and PKR vice-presidents Nurul Izzah Anwar and Chua Tian Chang, who is better known as Tian Chua.

Several newspapers gave much significance to Najib's speech in Sabah yesterday, when he admitted that the number 11 played a significant role in his life.

Najib said this year was Umno's 66th anniversary as well as the country's 55th anniversary of independence and both these numbers were divisible by 11.

This prompted some newspapers to project the 13th general election in November.

But Jalil Merdeka Najib Speculation of an early general election has been rife since late last year, when Najib was asked whether he would dissolve Parliament and hold the election on Nov 11.

English daily The Star also quoted Election Commission deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar as saying the weather would play an important role in the EC's preparations.

Wan Ahmad said parts of the country, especially in the East Coast, would be prone to flash floods between November and March,

"Ten to 20 per cent of the polling centres nationwide are located in flood prone areas," Wan Ahmad is quoted as saying.

Improving wages for police force

The Pakatan secretaries meeting also announced a three-pronged approach to bring down crime, including increasing the wages and perks for members of the police force.

Mustafa said there was, first of all, the need to redeploy personnel to crime-proned areas.

"For example, there is no need for policemen to make themselves present at political ceramah as they can be deployed elsewhere.

"Furthermore, there is concern about the police being burdened with too many cases, with some officers investigating up to 20 cases at a time, compared with, ideally, five cases," he said.

Secondly, Mustafa said, if Pakatan became the government, it would look into increasing the salaries and perks of the police force and thirdly, there would be a significant investment in technology and forensics equipment.

Nurul Izzah said the police-to-citizens ratio was 1:217 and that this was still all right.

"While we welcome Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein's announcement to increase the force by 80,000, it would be better if the existing personnel are deployed more effectively. The increase in wages will have a significant impact," Nurul Izzah said, adding that an announcement on this would be made later.

Tian Chua, who is also Batu MP, said the police should look at the economic benefits of curbing crime, since improved security would certainly bring about increased investments in the country.

He said one of the factors that could be restraining businesses or investments coming to Malaysia was the lax of security.

Asked whether the proposal would also be put into Pakatan's election manifesto, Mustafa indicated that it would be done.