

'Malays must dominate political leadership'

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By Koh Jun Lin

Malaysia should retain a Malay-dominated political leadership if it wants stability, suggested political scientist Wahabuddin Ra'ees.

NONE "If it doesn't happen, then perhaps Malaysia could face difficult times ahead," he told a seminar themed 'Multicultural values in elections', held at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) yesterday.

"Therefore Malaysians should start to engage in a debate on the issue of political leadership, which was a Malay-dominated political leadership, and I would argue it should still remain a Malay-dominated political leadership."

The IIUM associate professor said he was "a bit disturbed" by over-emphasis on the role of PAS and DAP in the 13th general election, but which under-emphasised PKR that is like a glue that holds Pakatan Rakyat together.

However, he also opined that ethnic-based parties have no future in Malaysian politics, and therefore a new mechanism is required to ensure Malay-led leadership in multi-ethnic parties.

He cautioned that his comments should not be misconstrued to mean that non-Malays should not get "their fair-share".

Asked on what basis Malay leadership can be maintained, he cited the social contract, also saying that Malays in a political position are more accommodative than people of other races.

"Malays have a long history and experience going back hundreds of years. It is not a matter of overnight changing and getting a few seats," he added.

"I think the Malays would be more accommodative - sorry to say - compared to Chinese and others if you are in that political position."

NONE At another session, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia lecturer Chang Peng Kee said the Chinese-language media is the fairest and most balanced of the newspapers that he has surveyed.

He based this on an analysis of 7,481 reports in Sin Chew Daily, Nanyang Siang

Pau, Berita Harian, Utusan Malaysia, Star, New Straits Times, Tamil Nesan and Malaysia Namban between nomination day on April 20 and polling day on May 5.

He said the Chinese-language media had given equitable coverage to all parties, and reported with a relatively even tone.

Malay-language dailies took a pro-BN while attacking Pakatan, he said, while the English language and Tamil dailies had a pro-BN slant without much negative coverage of the Pakatan campaign.

However, he said this is preliminary data which will be subjected to further analysis.

Malaysiakini reports deemed 'credible'

IIUM assistant professor Zeti Azreen Ahmad said she had surveyed 872 Malaysiakini reports published between April 20 and May 5 in English and Malay.

About 25 percent of these were from the national news agency Bernama, while nine percent quoted reports by other newspapers. Its own content made up 62 percent of the reports.

NONE"Despite being an online (news portal), Malaysiakini also depends on the same source of information as the mainstream media.

"However, Malaysiakini prevails as among the most-sought after media as they are not associated with the government or BN, (and is) thus free of government control. Therefore, their news is being perceived as credible, accurate and representing diverse views."

She said 53 percent of Malaysiakini's election coverage comprised "balanced" articles about the government.

Zeti also noted that BN had failed to regain its two-thirds majority in parliament.

"This means that what appears in the news may not be a predictor to voter behaviour," she added, while cautioning that her findings are also at a preliminary stage.

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