

Rafizi: Delayed Kajang polls can be good for PKR

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A delayed by-election in Kajang can be a positive for PKR as it will help the party restore its battered image, the party's director of strategy Rafizi Ramli said.

While Rafizi (left) conceded that much can happen in the 44-day run-up to the March 23 polling date for the Kajang by-election set by the Election Commission (EC) yesterday, he was unperturbed. The seat was vacated by PKR assemblyperson Lee Chin Cheh suddenly on Jan 27, to make way for federal opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to contest.

"I think (if by-elections are later) it will be better for us... the people's anger will subside and this gives us more time to draw close to the people.

"I take it positively," said Rafizi after a forum on the 'Kajang move' in Subang last night.

Rafizi said that the EC may have given leeway for Umno and BN to prepare for the contest, adding that the Kajang move probably may have seriously impacted Umno's plan to grab back Selangor in the next general election.

"Until now, they (BN) have yet to make a decision to run or not (in Kajang)," he said.

Later, during the question-and-answer session, Rafizi, however, said he was a little tired of defending the 'Kajang move'.

"If after a week and this long forum, I still can't convince you, then I won't convince you.

"Whatever questions you pose to me are merely an attack, so I will let it be. You have all the answers and if you are not convinced, then let us do what is proper," said Rafizi, who is also the MP for Pandan.

He was responding to a question from Islamic Renaissance Front (IRF) chairperson Dr Farouk Musa (left), who accused him of giving flip-flop answers. Farouk noted Rafizi had said that the Kajang by-election was a road to Putrajaya, that it was to overcome internal party politics and now, that it was a response to shifting political

dynamics.

Rafizi answered that he has disclosed everything in the press statement issued the day after Lee quit. He said all the reasons given were correct, including internal party politics.

"However, it was the political dynamics in the last seven months that made us decide on the Kajang move," he added.

Ambiga soften stance on Kajang move?

Meanwhile, another forum participant, former Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan, wondered why the commission needed so long to prepare for the by-elections.

However, Ambiga (right) appeared to have softened her stance on the Kajang move. The former Bar Council chairperson had at first protested the by-election as the move puzzled her, and she questioned why public money was being wasted unnecessarily.

At the forum, she, however, urged voters to come out and to ensure that the voice of democracy was alive.

"I know some of you (voters) want to boycott because you are angry and feel used. To vote or not, it's your right... but I urge you to think again because you can voice out with the vote and use it," she said.

Yesterday, the EC said the Kajang by-elections will be held on March 23, and set March 11 as the date for nomination followed by a 12-day campaign period.

During the 13th general election, PKR's Lee won the seat by defeating five other candidates including MCA's Lee Ban Seng, with a majority of 6,000 votes.

The Kajang state assembly seat has 39,278 voters, with 48 percent Malays, 40 percent Chinese, 10 percent Indians and 1 percent others.

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