

Pollster: Rafizi's survey paints rosy picture but it's a thorny path ahead

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The survey by PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli's Invoke Centre for Policy Initiatives (I-CPI) painted a positive picture for Pakatan Harapan, but omitted certain realities, says pollster Ibrahim Suffian.

"He (Rafizi) talked about what they (Harapan) needed in order to win, but then there are the things he did not say, which is the status quo.

"It's omitting the elephant-sized reality that Pakatan Harapan cannot win over enough Malays to challenge BN," Ibrahim told *Malaysiakini* today.

This reality had already played out during the double by-elections last year, in Sungai Besar and Kuala Kangsar, he said, and the I-CPI survey results mirrored what happened in the by-elections.

Rafizi's I-CPI yesterday released the results of their preliminary survey and they ran simulations that predicted the opposition coalition may win the next election.

However, this outcome depended on several factors, namely that half of those who did not vote in the previous election cast their ballots in favour of Harapan; Chinese voter support for the opposition coalition is at GE13 levels; and that they can win over 38 percent of PAS supporters.

Ibrahim, who is Merdeka Center programme director, said these assumptions I-CPI had put up in order for the opposition coalition to win showed that it was going to be an uphill task for Harapan without PAS.

"So many 'ifs' need to be fulfilled in order to achieve their goal.

"With the time, the resources, the leadership they have, are they able to move large numbers of people to switch over to their side?

"If they are not able to do that, which the likelihood is fairly high, why can't they compromise on issues they can work together with PAS?" he questioned.

Ibrahim explained that voters had political affiliations that were built over the years with their chosen party.

Affiliations cannot be bought and sold

These political affiliations cannot be bought and sold like goods in a store, he said.

"The hardcore PAS voters remain loyal to their party and they are quite a sizable chunk of the electorate.

"PAS is an old party, it's been around for 60 years, and it's a cradle-to-grave type of party," he pointed out.

The only way Harapan can hope to sway PAS voters their way, Ibrahim said, is for them to offer the voters something completely new and interesting.

Harapan's biggest challenge, he said, is to accept the reality that they are not as popular among Malays as PAS and that they have not offered sufficient reason for PAS voters to swap parties.

"They have two choices, either to carry on and fight in three-cornered fights and lose, or find it within themselves to reach a compromise with the Islamic party.

"The best bet is for them to find a way to work together (with PAS), otherwise they are all going to lose," he said.

Though he could not say for certain whether the I-CPI survey is scientific, as he does not know their methodology, he said it is a meaningful and sobering survey.

"I think it is a meaningful survey that should not be dismissed, it is a sobering survey.

"It does provide useful information for political parties to think about where they want to go next.

"If I was BN, I would work doubly hard to make sure the opposition remains split," Ibrahim said.

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