

**PAS holds retreat to evaluate Malay support**  
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PAS today began a three-day leadership retreat in Port Dickson to discuss its preparation and strategies for the next general election, due in 2013.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali said the retreat was also aimed at discussing how to woo more voters in the rural and predominantly Malay constituencies.

He said the retreat was being attended by all the top leaders of the party, including spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and all the members of its religious council (Majlis Syura).

"We were supposed to hold the retreat at an earlier date, but due to the Sibu by-election (on May 16), we postponed it to today," he told Bernama.

NONEMustafa did not reveal more details of the retreat, but party sources said on the agenda was the presentation of a detailed study conducted by an independent opinion poll researcher, Ilham Centre, on the party's efforts to woo the Malay and rural voters.

PAS had engaged Ilham Centre to identify the concerns of the Malay voters, especially in the west coast and southern peninsula, with the hope of making significant inroads in constituencies regarded as Umno strongholds.

#### PAS facing difficulties

Some political analysts believe the party is facing difficulty in terms of conveying its message according to its perspective to the rural and Malay voters who do not have access to the Internet.

While the party seems to have improved support among the non-Malays, there is talk of a small drop in terms of support from the Malays.

PAS's task will not be easy as the party will also be competing against the Malay rights group, Perkasa, led by Ibrahim Ali, which has been gaining popularity since its inception in 2008.

Apart from that, its party organ Harakah is staring at the possibility of having its publishing permit suspended, which will limit its ability to convey its message to the rural voters.

"Basically, they don't have a choice but to get back to the Malay voters.

"However, I think the main objective of the retreat is about getting the election machinery ready," political analyst James Chin told the news agency.

#### Introspection

pas muktamar 130610 salahuddin ayub 2Meanwhile, the party vice-president Salahuddin Ayub (left) said the retreat will serve to improve the machinery of the party.

"It is more for reviewing our effectiveness last year and to plan our next moves," said Salahuddin, who is also the member of Parliament for Kubang Kerian.

According to him, the retreat will also address key internal issues of the party.

However, he declined to comment further, saying that the matters are confidential and that all the sessions in the retreat will be closed to the media.

Malaysiakini was told that the retreat will commence after the party's monthly CWC meeting.

Several working papers will be presented and then opened for discussions.

The last time PAS held a retreat was last year in Alor Setar where the issue of its supporters club was discussed.

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