

Fool-proof measures in place for PKR polls
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Come October, more than 400,000 Parti Keadilan Rakyat members will cast their votes for the top leadership, in which 26 posts are up for grabs.

In what would be a historic milestone for any political party in Malaysia, PKR will be implementing direct elections, which means one vote for each member to decide on the candidates.

Deputy president Syed Husin Ali is confident that water-tight measures are already in place to check abuse, scoffing at suggestions that there could be ugly incidents such as phantom voters and vote-buying.

NONE "It will be difficult for candidates to buy votes since there are hundreds of thousands of voters, as compared to the previous practice of just 2,000 delegates voting.

"And no, I don't think there will be phantom voters since our membership rolls will be quite up-to-date," Syed Husin (right) said at a press conference at the party headquarters this morning.

However, the party is not leaving anything to chance, enforcing a disciplinary committee and an in-house elections coordination unit to attend to disciplinary or administrative complaints.

There will also be a code of ethics for candidates at both division and national levels.

Party secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail warned that candidates in breach of the code risk disqualification.

"But the guidelines are not rigid. We trust the maturity of our members," he said.

No personal attacks

"You cannot engage in personal attacks. Instead, you have to focus on what you yourself can offer to the delegates," said Saifuddin.

NONE "You also obviously cannot hold a kenduri to canvass for votes. But we know that fasting time is near, so you can have a buka puasa function, but the mention of party elections must not arise," he said.

Saifuddin (right), who was formerly the Umno Youth secretary-general before he joined the party, also issued a reminder that he already knows all the dirty tricks in the book used to rig votes.

"I know that there was a division in Labuan Umno once, where they chartered a bus in which to hold the division annual general meeting. Their meeting was hurried and it went on while the bus was moving all around Labuan.

"That was their way of keeping out dissenters and those who wanted to challenge them," he said.

And to monitor the polls is the party's 10-person elections committee headed by Molly Cheah. The committee - although comprised of party member themselves - will act as a monitoring body and will not be allowed to cast votes in the polls.

azlan They will be assisted by 150 election 'prefects' who will go around the country to each division to keep an eye on the election process.

The party's 205 divisions will start voting for their division leaders at their respective division AGMs, from Sep 17 to Oct 3. At the same time they will also make nominations for the central party leadership posts.

Candidates for the central committee positions require the nominations of at least two divisions.

The division members will then meet again from Oct 29 to Nov 21 to cast their ballots for the national leadership positions. Depending on the turnout of each division, the division's results could be announced as early as by the end of the day after the 'prefects' have finished counting.

With this system, candidates will know their standing and popularity among the members from one division to another.

The final results of the national leadership polls will be announced at the party's national congress on Nov 27.

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