

Moment of truth arrives for PKR
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COMMENT They say in a race it's the last 50 meters that separates the men from the boys.

The PKR election process, unique in the annals of political parties in Malaysia in that it allows for direct voting by members of its principal office bearers, has entered the decisive phase where a distinction will be made of the process' essential maturity or imbecility.

Done transparently, this phase will excuse the irregularities that marred the preliminaries as inevitable in a first-time exercise; a slovenly conducted finale will certify the party as pretentious.

Nobody would have reasonably expected that the party's unique attempt to allow for truly popular choice in the election of its office bearers from divisional to national level would not be marred by irregularities.

For a relatively new party with 400,000 members in 218 divisions spread over far flung Sarawak and Sabah and the peninsula, this exercise in democratic populism was daunting in its logistics.

Warts and all

Truly, no party would have attempted it except one as determined as PKR in putting distance between it and its nemesis Umno, whose comparable exercises are more nearly coronations than expressions of democratic consent.

Thus far the exercise, warts and all, would be magnificent in accomplishment if the finale is conducted transparently.

Given that a general election is imminent, and PKR is ambitious to bring the now 12-year ferment in Malaysian politics to its logical culmination in a Putrajaya apotheosis, the last 50 meters of the party's unique elective exercise must be without the flaws that attended the prelude.

Central casting in politics is not for juveniles.

TERENCE NETTO has been a journalist for close on four decades. He likes the occupation because it puts him in contact with the eminent without being under the necessity to admire them.

PKR direct election	
• Aug 27 - Sept 12	Nominations for leadership contest in 205 divisions.
• Sept 17 - Oct 3	All divisions to hold AGMs where elections are held. The division will also make nominations for supreme council's posts. To qualify, a candidate requires nominations from at least two divisions.
• Oct 10	Supreme council nominations closed.
• Oct 24	PKR to announce official national candidates list.
• Oct 29 - Nov 21	Delegates to meet at the divisional level. Voting for 26 supreme council posts to be held, as well as president, deputy president and four vice-presidents. Results to be announced at the end of each elections at the respective divisions.
• Nov 27 -28	PKR 2010 national congress in Shah Alam.
Source: PKR HQ	
Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini	

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