

Rookie's first day blues in Batu Sapi
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Poor organisation and sheer inexperience bogged down PBS' campaign machinery this morning, as the BN component party finally hit the campaign trail with candidate Linda Tsen Chau Lin, a day behind their by-election rivals.

Despite having sent out the day's programme to the media the night before, it appeared officials in charge had little idea of what to do, suffering a breakdown in communication between the campaign machinery and both Tsen and party president Joseph Pairin Kitingan (*right*).

A party insider, who has come from outside Sandakan to help in the campaign, pointed out that even party members themselves are not sure of how they are to go about promoting Tsen and her bid for the parliamentary seat.

"The party leadership only had their meeting yesterday and they finished well past 10.30pm. After that, Tan Sri (Pairin) had to go for the state BN meeting, which only ended past midnight. We're just waiting for orders here," said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Of greater concern for the party, however, is the opening performance of their candidate, who looked clearly ill-at-ease as she made the first of many scheduled campaign stops, starting at Bandar Ramai-Ramai.

Tsen, a professional pianist, rushed through the first few shops in the area, practically jumping from table to table in a restaurant to shake everyone's hands as photographers scrambled to get a clear shot of her.

She slowed down after 10 minutes, but only after photographers asked her to strike a pose for the cameras with her prospective constituents.

Minimal interaction

Her outing nevertheless remained a touch-and-go affair, with Tsen for the most part confining her interaction to the bare minimum. She was also seen periodically consulting senior party leaders, particularly vice-president Dr Yee Moh Chai, in between stops.

She however soldiered on, finishing her first scheduled walkabout through Bandar Ramai-Ramai, Bandar Leila and Bandar Nam Tung without too much of a fuss.

She was scheduled to go on a 2.30pm walkabout in Pasar Kim Fung and Bandar Hing Loong, followed by a 6pm visit to the Taman Mawar housing estate.

Tomorrow, she will visit the Tanah Merah, Sibuga and Taman Mawar markets starting at 6.30am before joining deputy premier Muhyiddin Yassin as he arrives to help with the campaigning.

Tsen is locked in a three-corner tussle for the parliamentary seat against PKR's Ansari Abdullah, and former Sabah chief minister Yong Teck Lee from SAPP for the polls on Nov 4.

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