

Why the low turnout in weekend PKR voting
Malaysiakini.com
November 01, 2010

PKR has identified several reasons for the low voter turnout among the 68 divisions voting for its national leaders over the weekend, with the Malaysia Cup final as the prime factor.

Party secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail admitted that many of the divisions voting during the period were in Kelantan and Negri Sembilan, the states in the football final, and this badly affected the turnout. Kelantan won the cup, defeating Negri Sembilan 2-1.

"The Malaysia Cup final resulted in members not coming out and vote NONEas most party members travelled to Kuala Lumpur to watch the match. Another reason for Kelantan is that many members are also tied up with helping in the Galas by-election campaign," Saifuddin said.

"Voting was also carried out on Friday, coinciding with the Friday prayers. A number of members, having already attended division meetings weeks earlier, could have felt it a burden to come out again to vote," he said.

Saifuddin also blamed the low voter turnout on the suspension of the PKR mouthpiece Suara Keadilan, which has a weekly circulation of 150,000, saying this hindered the dissemination of information to members on the party polls in their localities.

"The Election Commission is able to advertise over the radio or television for the people to come out to vote, but PKR does not have the funds to do so," he said.

"About nine-percent of the voters cast their votes over the three days from Friday," he said, adding that he hoped to rectify this in the future. "For example, we are studying the possibility of having voting for the national party leaders immediately after the division meetings."

PKR has 400,000 members nationwide, the bulk of them in Selangor and Sabah. A majority of these members are scheduled to vote this weekend and Saifuddin called on them to turn up in large numbers.

Divisions in Malacca, Perak, Penang, Pahang, and the bulk of those in Kelantan and Negri Sembilan had their polling session last weekend.

Snub to Umno Youth's Khairy

Saifuddin was also asked to comment on Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin's statement to several media organisations yesterday that the low turnout at the PKR polls was the result of its members being fed up with the party's declining relevancy and infighting

The PKR secretary-general said Khairy should focus on his dwindling popularity in Umno Youth and not meddle in PKR affairs.

"Khairy should be concerned over why his members are not warming up to his speech or ideas highlighted during the recent Umno general assembly."

"He should work on in ensuring his majority increases as he only obtained 300-plus votes," he said.

Nevertheless, Saifuddin thanked Khairy for his concern for the PKR.

Khairy polled 304 votes against former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo (254) and Mukhriz Mahathir (232) in last year's election for the Umno Youth leadership.

Investigate giveaways by Shahrizat

Saifuddin, who is the Machang MP, also called on the Election Commission to investigate claims that Women and Family Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil has been paying voters RM20 each to hear her talk in the Batu Sapi by-election campaign.

"If there is truth to such allegations, then the EC, particularly its kuala terengganu parliament by election spr ec announcement 051208 wan ahmad wan omar deputy chairperson Wan Ahmad Wan Omar, should investigate.

"Wan Ahmad (right) has been quick to jump up and down when the Kelantan PAS offered RM250 to Galas outstation voters to come back and vote. Wan Ahmad is certainly placed in a complex position following such revelations in Batu Sapi. Will the EC investigate?" he asked.

Malaysiakini and some blogs reported the payout yesterday, during a Wanita Umno dinner function the previous night.

On PKR or Pakatan Rakyat's chances in Batu Sapi, Saifuddin, who is leaving for the constituency today, said the party was making inroads.

"BN has been attacking SAPP's Yong Teck Lee quite a lot, and we have made some significant progress in the constituency as a result of this," he said.

Batu Sapi is facing a three-way fight among PKR's vice-president candidate Ansari Abdullah, Yong and the BN's Linda Tsen Thau Lin, who is from PBS. Tsen is the widow of former MP Edmund Chong, whose sudden death brought about the by-election. Voting is on Thursday.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/147045>