

Indian votes weigh in on Selangor DAP polls
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DAP Selangor's state polls on Sunday are expected to be a definitive moment for their Indian membership base - a likely deciding factor for victory between the two feuding factions.

While it would be a stretch of the imagination to declare that the majority of Indian members - who are strongly represented in 28 of the 145 divisions qualified to send delegates - are clearly leaning towards one side, their ability to swing the results cannot be discounted if the divisional polls are taken as a measure.

A clear example would be that of Petaling Jaya Utara, where incumbent chairperson James Ooi scored a slim two-vote victory over Kampung Tunku assemblyperson Lau Weng San, 30 to 28.

Ooi's team, which is said to be aligned to the Justice Reform faction, also went on to sweep all posts in the division save the vice-chair.

Party insiders attributed the results to senior party leaders Kannan Thangarasu and Batumalai Malinaidu, who successfully mobilised Indian members in the division to rally behind the Justice team's cause.

NONThe Justice team, which is purportedly led by Selangor state assembly speaker Teng Chang Khim (left), also chalked up an emphatic win in the Klang division, with their candidate Ivan Ho securing 93 votes ahead of Ang Leng Kiat's 46.

The pro-Justice members also took a large portion of the posts in Klang, including the deputy chair, vice-chair, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer posts, among others.

While many of the votes were from members disgruntled over the sacking of senior party man Tee Boon Hock, who is lending his influence to the Justice team, credit was also given to Kannan and Batumalai for garnering the votes that led to the huge margin of victory.

But on how they read the Indian vote situation, none of the Justice team's members, including Sekinchan assemblyperson Ng Suee Lim, were willing to give anything away.

One of them noted that they have decided to impose a gag order until they are done with their campaigning by Saturday.

Playing down the risk

Their rivals, the Unity team - comprising mostly incumbent state party leaders lead by Selangor executive councillor Teresa Kok - acknowledge the possibility of a swing in the Indian votes but pointed out that it was more likely for it to be split evenly between the two factions.

selangor dap unity teamUnity team member V Ganabatirau noted that there is a certain degree of "ethnic-based sentiments" brewing in the state polls, particularly with 11 Indian candidates out of the 50 going for the 15 posts up for grabs in the state leadership.

"But the majority of the branches have not come to any unanimous decision... there does not look to be any movement to vote for either the Unity or Justice teams and I don't think there is a collective strategy at the moment," he said when contacted.

Ganabatirau admitted that both Kannan and Batumalai are an asset for the Justice team in drawing the Indian votes, but stressed that the trend is largely unreadable, reflecting the overall view of the 1,100 largely new delegates.

"A few of the (Indian) branches would have already picked a team, but mostly it is hard to read. The swing will depend on service (rendered), their experience, the benefits in the long run and how well the candidates can work with the central leadership."

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