

Pakatan Rakyat battle-ready for Sarawak polls
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KUCHING – PKR state leader Baru Bian and DAP state secretary Chong Chieng Jen say they are ready for any snap poll.

And Baru Bian is even optimistic enough to say that Pakatan Rakyat could take over the state government, although indications now are that it has a very slim chance.

"In an election, anything can happen," he told *Malaysian Mirror*.

Baru Bian is confident that the Pakatan will be able to face any election called, as negotiation of seat allocation is almost complete among the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, which consists of PKR, DAP, SNAP and PAS.

"I am the least worried about the allocation of seats as we are in the final stage of completing it, 90% done. However, the PKR will be getting the most number of seats, at around 40.

"The fact is that we are more of a multi-racial based and contested in majority Malay, Dayak and Chinese seats. DAP will contest in over 20 seats followed by either SNAP or PAS who will contest in other seats," he said.

Baru Bian is leading a team comprising Deputy State Chairman Wan Zainal Abidin Wan Sanusi, Chief of Bureau election, Baharuddin Datuk Mokhsen, and Vice-Chairman Jimmy Donald while the DAP team is headed by Chairman Wong Ho Leng, Deputy Chairman Chiew Chin Sing and Vice Chairman Chong Siew Chiang.

Baru Bian affirmed that the coalition negotiation team enjoyed a comfortable and cordial relationship and should there be any snap poll, he believes the spirit of 'give and take' will allow everyone to contest on a one-to-one basis to give them a better chance of winning the election. He said all seat allocation would be finalised by end of this month.

In the last state election, PKR fielded 25 seats, DAP 12, SNAP 29, and PAS 1 for a total of 71 seats.

DAP won six seats in Sentosa, Pending, Batu Lintang, Kidurong, Bukit Asset and Meradong. PKR won one seat in Padungan and SNAP, one in Engkilili. Ngemah was won by an Independent candidate.

During the 2008 election, the PKR and DAP talks collapsed and its leaders fought each other in Sarikei, Sibuluan and Stampin handing Barisan Nasional the seats on a silver platter.

PKR representative for Padungan Dominique Ng was alleged to be the man behind the squabbles and he is currently entangled in a legal battle with DAP's Siew Chiang.

Chieng Jen, who was not involved in the horse trading, said he did not want to go into the issue. He said he is not even sure where he would be standing in the coming election. "But I can safely said we are ready for the election."

"All the DAP YBs will not know where or who is the candidate in the coming election. We

have to abide by the decision of the state committee and the central executive Committee," he said.

Chong, who is also the Sentosa state assemblyman, said this was one of the reasons why DAP leaders were given the task of helping those in need in all constituencies and not stick to their own area.

"You can find us assisting people in areas which were never contested by us and we do not choose to help by race. Be it the Malays, Dayaks or Chinese, those in need who come to us for assistance, we render it to them in our best capacity," he said.

Chong said it has always been their stand to help out and despite being a more Chinese based party, he said they are moving towards a multi-racial make-up with branches set up in rural Dayak areas like those in Serian and Sri Aman.

He cautioned that members of the coalition should remain united and organised in their stand in order to stand a higher chance of wresting more seats from Barisan Nasional in the coming election.

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