

PKR polls: Party faces storm of protests
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PETALING JAYA - The month-long Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) elections came to a close Sunday but disenchantment among members continues to plague the party.

There have been fresh claims of irregularities in the elections with at least two branches closing down and their members quitting en bloc, according to The Star.

Taman Permai Indah and Pandamaran branch members quit the party en bloc Sunday, citing loss of confidence in the party leadership.

Taman Permai Indah branch chairman A. Prakash described the PKR as more like a "communist party", claiming members were denied the right to speak up against alleged irregularities in the recent party elections.

"The leaders do not practise what they preach. There is no justice and fairness in this party," he was quoted as saying by The Star.

The polls for the party's central leadership which began on Oct 29 have been marred by protests and resignations with many members, including deputy president aspirant Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, crying foul.

Johor's Ayer Hitam division pro-tem chairman Zaid Mohd Yusof said the 116 members in the division had been denied their constitutional rights as they were not given early notification on the polling date.

"I received an SMS message from the election monitor at 1am today (Sunday) to prepare a hall for elections today.

"How can we prepare a venue at such short notice? This is not consistent with the party constitution and democratic practices," he said, adding none of the members could participate in the central party elections.

Zaid Mohd blamed Johor PKR chief Chua Jui Meng for the problem. "Chua is only interested in securing positions for himself and his cronies," he claimed.

The final round of party elections on Sunday also revealed a shocking statistic - the Tanjung Piai pro-tem division has a solitary member, its chief Hasan Karim.

As a result, Hasan had to cast his divisional vote at the Pontian division. A member who declined to be named said it was a shame that the party had given pro-tem status to a division which only had one member.

"It goes to show that they are willing to set aside rules and regulations for their cronies," he was quoted as saying by The Star.

On Saturday, elections in Puchong and Hulu Selangor turned rowdy following allegations of electoral discrepancies.

A candidate allegedly launched a verbal attack against an election officer, claiming bias in

the tallying process.

The officer had to summon police for help.

The Hulu Selangor division election was also marred by protests, as about 100 members made attempts to obstruct vehicles carrying ballot papers to the voting centre in Kuala Kubu Baru.

The group was angry because the party had overturned an earlier decision to declare the divisional elections null and void.

The division was supposed to concurrently hold a divisional re-election and polling for central party posts on Saturday.

The poll results for the posts of PKR deputy president, vice-presidents, Youth chief and Wanita chief are expected to be announced at the end of the party's national congress at Dewan Sivik, Petaling Jaya City Council, next weekend.

The winners for the 20 central leadership council posts, however, are expected to be known as early as Monday, according to sources.

Over in Sabah, it was reported that a key aide to party vice-president Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, Philip Among, has quit on Sunday, dealing a blow to PKR in the state.

According to observers, more resignations are expected in the state.

A senior PKR leader, however, says the party will focus on the coming general election rather than be embroiled in internal bickering.

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