

Campaign to heat up after Aidiladha

Anwar setting the tone of lobbying in the six states with trip to Penang

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PETALING JAYA: With all assemblies except for Negri Sembilan dissolved, lobbying for votes in the six state elections is expected to go into full swing now that Hari Raya Haji is over.

The Negri Sembilan state assembly will be dissolved tomorrow.

The tone of the campaign is being set by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim himself, who is making his way to Permatang Pauh, his former parliamentary district, which was his family's stronghold until his daughter lost to a Perikatan Nasional candidate in the last general election.

He will be performing Friday prayers at the constituency today, followed by a "korban" function and other tea-time events that will see him come face to face with his voters.

While campaigning can only start after nomination, political parties are already making it a point to highlight their achieve-

ments to voters, especially on social media.

Many representatives and potential candidates have started to post videos, statements and pictures of events, as well as details of their on-the-ground events.

In Selangor, Perikatan Nasional, with its Selangor Baharu tagline, has been posting a series of reasons why people should vote for the coalition.

Pakatan Harapan, led by acting Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, has also been featuring its achievements in the state.

Datuk Lokman Adam, who is heading the unity government's media secretariat, acknowledged that the campaigns are already under way, with Anwar and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi having political programmes nearly every day.

Lokman also agreed that campaigning would heat up after the Hari Raya Haji celebrations. He will also be present at a joint Barisan Nasional-Pakatan



ceramah in Shah Alam on July 5.

"I'm concentrating on social media. But, sometimes, I will go out as well," said Lokman, urging Malaysians to analyse all the information they receive, given the rise in fake news.

Federal Territories Perikatan information chief Mahathir Mohd Rais said Bersatu, a part of the Perikatan coalition, has a clear strategy to engage with urban voters, especially those in Selangor.

"Our approach is holistic and

inclusive, addressing the needs of all components in this culturally diverse region.

"A broad spectrum of voters, from the young to those aged 60 and above, can be reached via platforms like Tik Tok, Facebook, and Instagram," he said, adding that social media reach can extend to an estimated 80% of the voting population.

The state elections will take place in six states, namely Selangor, Penang, Negri Sembilan, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu.

Prof James Chin, from the Asia Institute at the University of Tasmania, Australia, pointed out that Pakatan had already been campaigning over the last few months.

"They (Pakatan) understood what was needed for the six state elections; the most obvious was the indirect form of campaigning with Hari Raya open houses and meet-the-people sessions hosted by Anwar.

"This will intensify as we head towards the actual elections; the big events will occur after nomination days.

"After Hari Raya Haji, the campaigns will be blown up on social media from next week onwards," he said.

He added that political parties will now be more selective in putting up flags, as it has become more expensive.

Chin said the parties get more value for their money via social media campaigns.

"This is where it gets interesting. Perikatan, especially PAS, has been successful in using this tool. The question now is whether it has enough money to carry it out this time around.

"Social media is king in urban areas, so they will concentrate on Malay areas like Bangi and Kajang," he said.

Azmi Hassan, a senior fellow at the Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research, said the campaign had begun before Hari Raya Haji.

"After the celebrations, it will pick up to a more vigorous stage," he said, adding that Perikatan will portray itself as the best coalition to protect the 3R issue of race, religion and royalty.