

Pakatan to hold final convention in January before polls
The Malaysian Insider
December 22, 2011
By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 22 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will hold next month what will likely be the pact's last national convention before a widely-expected general election, and use the meet to iron out its polls strategy.

The Malaysian Insider understands the convention will take place in Kedah on January 14. Previous conventions were held in the PR-ruled states of Selangor and Penang.

The national convention aims to smoothen the working relationship between the three component PR parties — PKR, PAS and DAP — while also focusing on the opposition's game plan against the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN).

"We plan to focus on a more detailed and cogent articulation for our vision and offer to all Malaysians. The plan is to refine our various plans for Malaysia, if given the chance to govern at federal level," Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar told The Malaysian Insider.

The PKR vice-president said the focus of the convention would be very specific — PR leaders will prepare its members for polls by briefing them on what issues to tackle when speaking to potential voters.

She said the federal opposition would ensure that its future manifestoes or plans would be geared towards attracting young voters.

"We have various documents to date, ranging from Buku Jingga, 100 day plan, the opposition leader's Malaysian Economic Agenda, and the notable successes from PR governed states," she explained.

Nurul Izzah also said PR would use the convention to drive home the point to their members that they should be well-informed about on-going scandals concerning BN leaders.

"Granted, scandals — especially BN's success at making Malaysia a haven for black money laundering — are important highlights to cement reasons for change at the federal level," she said.

But she stressed the point that PR will explain to voters is that they have a solution and a team of leaders who will reduce wastage and corruption should the opposition take over Putrajaya.

The Lembah Pantai MP did not, however, answer whether this meant a shadow Cabinet line-up would be unveiled during the convention.

"We are committed to a leaner Cabinet once given the mandate to govern. Focus remains on plans and clear-cut policies to arrest the current decline of our institutions

"PR's choice for PM is firmed up, but for now, the focus remains on winning parliamentary

federal seats, allowing us a comfortable majority," she said.

Election 2008 saw Barisan Nasional suffer its worst polls performance ever, ceding five state governments and 82 parliamentary seats to the three parties that eventually made up PR.

BN chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has asked his coalition to prepare for polls, but has yet to indicate when he will seek a dissolution of the Parliament.

The ruling coalition's mandate is due to expire in early 2013.

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