

Analysts: Pakatan missed chance at resolving key issues at convention
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 15 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) missed an opportunity to float fresh ideas and address the pact's existing problems at its convention in Alor Star yesterday, analysts said today.

Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) chief executive Wan Saiful Wan Jan the lack of new thought meant PR had failed to position itself as a clear alternative to Barisan Nasional (BN) to voters even as polls loom.

"They can't just say BN is crumbling and therefore we should replace them... They have to be more bold," he told The Malaysian Insider.

The pact had also failed to fully flesh out its "Tawaran Jingga" policy thrusts, such as which powers would be devolved to state governments, he noted.

PR promised yesterday to re-examine the relationship between Putrajaya and state governments once in power, in a bid to shore up support in East Malaysia.

"Will states be able to raise taxes? Will they be able to appoint civil servants without federal interference? They need to be as bold as they are with [their Felda proposals]," Wan Saiful said.

Pollster Ibrahim Suffian said PR could have done a better job at addressing questions about its shadow Cabinet as well as the power-sharing principle that will guide the pact once it is in Putrajaya.

He said a framework to formalise competition between PR's component parties for seats was needed as most decisions still rested with the "senior guys".

Ibrahim, however, said he understood why PR had decided not to shake things up so close to a general election, noting that this would reduce potential conflict between PKR, PAS and DAP.

Political scientist James Chin characterised PR's decision to stick with its current script as a strategic move in preparation for likely snap polls, pointing out that the convention was more to "rally the troops" than to provide a forum for new ideas.

"They do not want to bring any new ideas to the table because then they would have to renegotiate everything (between the parties)..."

"The convention was not so much about convincing floating voters but reinforcing the existing troops," the Monash University Malaysia lecturer said.

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