

Anwar says almost half of PKR candidates to be new faces
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

PETALING JAYA, Jan 5 — Forty per cent of PKR candidates in the next general elections will be fresh faces, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has said, adding that a majority would consist of young professionals.

The PKR defacto leader said that as a result, a substantial number of incumbents would be dropped, because PKR as well as Pakatan Rakyat needed "more educated" elected representatives in Parliament.

"PKR will field 40 per cent new candidates for state and parliamentary seats in the general election. They may be new but they have a tested good record, and are more educated.

"Problems in the past is that we pushed activists (to contest)...but many professionals are activists too, commitment is of course important," he told The Malaysian Insider in an interview.

"We have made it quite clear that incumbents would be dropped for a number of reasons — health, performance. I think we need to have educated groups in Parliament and those who can fully perform well, have to have a younger team as well as more qualified women candidates," said Anwar, adding that "many" of the new candidates were below the age of thirty.

He said that PKR may formally announce some candidates and their contest areas in the near future, but stressed that the matter still needs to be finalised.

The Malaysian Insider recently reported that PKR will field fresher, young candidates for the next general election with a set criterion that aspiring lawmakers must have a solid educational background — they must be either qualified professionals or semi-professionals.

PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution told The Malaysian Insider back in October this was PKR's "new niche" or formula for the 13th general election where younger, qualified candidates will eventually replace some of the incumbent parliamentary and state representatives.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the PKR national leadership has begun talks with incumbent lawmakers with regards to allowing "new blood" to take over some seats. It is also learnt that some representatives have expressed "willingness" to allow the process to take place.

In the last general election, PKR won 31 of the 97 federal seats it contested, denying Barisan Nasional (BN) its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority with PR parties PAS and the DAP each having won 23 and 28 federal seats.

Anwar also said today that PR parties had nearly party seat allocations for the elections, with the exception of a few state and parliamentary seats in Kedah, Penang and Perak.

"It is 90 per cent resolved...seat negotiations are almost done, I heard Azmin (Ali), (Datuk) Mustafa (Ali) and (Tan) Kok Wai are working on it," said Anwar, referring to the respective PR leaders tasked with finalising the seat allocations.

PKR has said it will contest more federal seats in the next general election despite already taking the lion's share of seats and suffering the most number of party defections since 2008.

Election 2008 saw PKR become the largest opposition party in Parliament with a total of 31 MPs as BN suffered its worst performance at the polls ever, ceding five state governments and 82 parliamentary seats.

But it went on to lose its Hulu Selangor seat in a by-election, before six of its MPs turned independent, rendering DAP the opposition's biggest block in Parliament with 28 lawmakers.

However it is still ahead of PAS, which has the most members among the PR parties, with its 23 MPs.

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