

**Expecting snap polls, PR touts clean government**  
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**By Yow Hong Chieh**

ALOR STAR, Jan 14 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) kicked off its national convention today on a war footing, pledging to rid Malaysia of corruption and waste once the opposition pact wins federal power.

Taking the cue from speculation that snap polls will be called within the year, PR leaders hammered home the point that the time for change was now in their opening speeches at the Sultan Abdul Halim Stadium here.

Repeated references were made to BN's laundry list of alleged failures, from the recent National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scandal to the country's rapidly growing national debt, which they blamed on the ruling coalition's decades-long misrule.

"This country has been dirty for 53, 54 years. This is Pakatan Rakyat's big chance," DAP vice-chairman Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim (picture) told a crowd of 2,000 opposition delegates and supporters.

"We have to work together and get rid of BN in the next general election to clean up this country we love."

PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu said BN would continue to drain the country of its wealth if returned to power, stressing that a vote for PR was a vote for a better future.

"Their slogan is 'BN menang, rakyat senang', but we say 'BN menang, Malaysia bankrupt'," he said.

But Mohamad, popularly known as Mat Sabu, sounded a note of caution by pointing out that opposition victory was only possible if the opposition pact's component parties worked hand-in-hand and stuck to its common platform.

"We are confident we can attain success in the coming 13th general election if we unite," he said.

Using Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's surprise acquittal on Monday as a springboard, PKR deputy president Azmin Ali said that while the opposition leader was now free of sodomy charges, the people were not yet free.

"901 will be a source of inspiration for the people to reject extremist Umno and we will reject them in the next election," he said.

The convention, PR's third, is expected to focus on four policy thrusts aimed at swaying key vote blocs in preparation for the coming general election.

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