

## **BN leaders shifting into high gear for elections**

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SHORT-LISTING: Component parties getting ready candidates' list

KUALA LUMPUR: PEOPLE'S Progressive Party (PPP) will call for a meeting between its state leaders tomorrow to short list the names of its candidates for the next general election.

Its president, Datuk Seri M. Kayveas, said they were in the midst of preparing the list.

"We have identified some candidates and they are all party members," he said when contacted yesterday.

However, Kayveas said he had no objections if PPP state leaders wanted to nominate non-members as candidates.

He said PPP had expressed its intention to Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak for them to contest four parliamentary and 12 state seats in the next general election.

In the 2008 general election, PPP contested and lost both the seats -- Taiping parliamentary seat and Pasir Bedamar state seats.

Kayveas lost to Nga Kor Ming of DAP in Taiping and Lee Heng lost to Seah Leong Peng, also of the DAP, in Pasir Bedamar.

MIC secretary-general S. Murugesan said he believed that party president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel already had a list of candidates and would submit it within two weeks.

"As far as I know, we would be contesting the same number of seats we contested in the 2008 elections which is nine parliamentary seats and 19 state seats."

He added that MIC had long practised naming "surprise" candidates who were not within the party ranks.

In Tapah, MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the party had updated its list of candidates and it would be continuously evaluated.

"The short-listed candidates will be constantly studied to ensure that winnable candidates are chosen to ensure victory for BN," he said yesterday.

Liow said MCA leaders had been asked to go down to the ground and conduct nationwide programmes, especially seats in held by MCA.

He said the opposition parties -- DAP, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Pas -- were now confused over which party's candidate would hold the prime minister's post (in the event they win).

"Pas wants their candidate to become the prime minister, but so does PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim."

In Malacca, the state BN election machinery had been instructed to move to areas near all polling stations to identify voters and update their data besides looking at problems faced by them.

This move would ensure any problems faced by the voters in the state would be addressed effectively and promptly, said state BN chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.

"We want to know the issues and concerns of the voters so that we can look into it.

"Our primary aim by getting the election machinery, especially the 'Jaringan Rakyat' and the Group of 10 (K10), to update the data of the voters is to get closer to the people.

"By doing so, we will also ensure that the support for the BN remains strong," said Ali, who is also the chief minister, here, yesterday, when opening the Tangga Batu Umno division's group annual general meeting.

"Besides moving from house to house, we must make full use of technology by communicating with the IT-savvy voters through blogs and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter."

In Kuala Terengganu, state BN chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Said said that they would not repeat the mistake of fielding parachute candidates who are unknown to voters in the coming general election.

Ahmad, who is also the menteri besar, said Pas' victory in some constituencies in the 2008 general election was due to the candidate factor.

"Pas won not because of their strength. It was solely due to the BN candidates factor as the voters did not know them," he said at the Former Wakil Rakyat Council annual general meeting.

Ahmad said BN would steer away from "high class" and parachute candidates in preparation for the general election. In the 2008 elections, Pas won one parliamentary and eight state seats.

Pas later grabbed the Kuala Terengganu parliamentary seat in a by-election in 2009. Additional reporting by Satiman Jamin and S. Ista Kyra.

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