

Pakatan: DAP not going for 90 seats, talks ongoing
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 9 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders dismissed today reports that DAP planned on contesting the lion's share of parliamentary seats in the coming polls, pointing out seat negotiations were still ongoing.

DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang, who sits on PR's leadership council, told The Malaysian Insider that the allegations were baseless and "wild" as his party has only expressed its intention to contest not more than 60 seats during discussions.

"This is the most irresponsible journalism, part of a campaign to create fear and divide PR and the country's races," he said, referring to the report on the allegations, which was front-paged on Utusan Malaysia today.

The Umno-owned daily, citing three blogs — suarapakatanrakyat.com, mykmu.net and pisau.net — reported that DAP will contest in 90 federal seats — 43 seats more than it had previously contested in Election 2008 — while its PR partners PKR and PAS merely planned on contesting in 66 seats each.

The article said this would place the Chinese-dominated DAP in a "comfortable" position to elect a prime minister from among its candidates, despite repeated claims by PR leaders that it would be PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who would be appointed to the post.

But in the event that Anwar is still appointed prime minister, the article continued, the leader would become a mere "puppet prime minister", one who is subservient to "big brother" DAP as the most dominant partner in PR.

PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar strongly denied the article's claims, pointing out that DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng has repeatedly referred to her father as prime minister-designate.

"I believe YAB LGE's repeated announcement of DSAI as future PM if PR is given the chance to govern is the clearest indication of their readiness to maintain current set up of PR," she told The Malaysian Insider in a text message this afternoon.

The Lembah Pantai MP also insisted that all three parties in PR stood on equal footing, where none is considered superior to the others.

"Yes," she said, when queried if PR parties are considered equal even if one held more federal seats. "With the understanding that we are committed to upholding the Federal Constitution, including Article 153, as is."

Nurul Izzah also railed against Utusan Malaysia for the report and questioned the daily's apparent immunity from punishment over publishing false news.

"How the Home Ministry continues to allow them to publish despite the numerous legal losses is beyond me — except that it points to (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Najib Razak's sordid use of the paper for his own political gains," she said.

When contacted, PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar joined his coalition partners in rubbishing the report's allegations, saying it was merely a ploy to create fear among the Malay community over the possibility of a Chinese-dominated government should PR wrest federal power.

"This is BN's 'politik najis (dirty politics)' to create fear in the Malay community that DAP is going to take control of the government if they win the upcoming 13th general elections (GE)," he told The Malaysian Insider.

With DAP now holding the most seats in Parliament, Umno leaders have been warning the Malay electorate — seen today as the most divided community in terms of political support — that the Chinese-dominated party could very well form the next federal government if BN is booted out from Putrajaya.

There were even claims at one point that DAP was striving to install a Christian as the country's next prime minister, an allegation seen as an attempt by pro-Umno proponents to frighten the country's dominant Malay race back into BN's fold.

DAP's leaders have denied the accusations but have found themselves repeatedly the target of racially-charged attacks and allegations that the party is anti-Malay and anti-Islam.

The party currently has 29 federal lawmakers in Parliament while both PKR and PAS have 24 each.

PKR's parliamentary representation was reduced significantly from its original 31-seat win in Election 2008 after it was hit by the defections of five lawmakers and when it lost in the Hulu Selangor by-election in 2010.

In Election 2008, PKR won in 31 of the 97 seats it contested while DAP won in 28 of 47; PAS won 23 of 28. Both DAP and PAS increased their parliamentary representation by one seat each through the Sibul and Kuala Terengganu by-elections after the general election.

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