

DAP in push for new voters to narrow gap with BN
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By Hafidz Baharom

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 — The DAP will make a last-ditch effort to register more new voters in what it calls an effort to overcome the slim advantage in popular votes Barisan Nasional (BN) won over Pakatan Rakyat (PR) parties in Election 2008.

BN secured 4.08 million votes in 2008 compared to PR's 3.79 million — a difference of fewer than 290,000 votes — and the federal opposition hopes new voters in the next election can help tilt the balance towards the PR parties of DAP, PAS and PKR.

DAP said the nationwide voter registration campaign will start before September 15, on the expectation that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will call for the general election in January.

DAP Socialist Youth chief Anthony Loke told a press conference here today that the Election Commission (EC) had verified that there were still 3.3 million unregistered voters.

"This forms a very substantial 20.5 per cent of the total number of 16.2 million eligible voters," he said.

"Hence, it is absolutely clear that newly registered voters will make a definitive difference in the next general election, as the number of unregistered votes far outnumber the margin between the two coalitions," Loke said.

Loke said in the next three weeks, the three PR parties — DAP, PKR and PAS — will be setting up more than 40 voter registration sites at major shopping malls and at morning and night markets apart from registering new voters at their service centres.

He said the registration venues will be posted online next week at Reg2vote.com website. Those interested to register can also email their questions to info@reg2vote.com or call their hotline at 0168782472 during this campaign period.

He said the DAP will also be pushing greater voter registration awareness through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and video-sharing website YouTube.

"These fans will have a reach of a few million other Facebook users should they share our message with their friends, many of whom we believe have not registered given their age profiles," Loke said.

The DAP's voter registration campaign video titled "Alamak! Kena Register!?" (Oh! I have to register?!) launched on YouTube last Saturday has been viewed as many as 7,981 times as at the time of today's press conference, Loke said.

He asked those eligible to be voters to register before September 15, the EC's cut-off date, to ensure they would qualify to cast their ballots in the next general elections, which he said is looking more likely to be called only next year.

"The deadline set by the EC for voter registration for the third quarter of 2012 ends September 30, but we need to give the EC a week to process all the forms we've collected," Loke said.

Parliament will automatically dissolve next April, paving the way for the 13th general elections, even if national polls are not called before then.

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