

PKR maintains incumbents for KL seats
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By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

KUALA LUMPUR, April 11 — PKR will maintain all incumbents in the capital city apart from a new addition, Datuk Tan Kee Kwong, who will be contesting for the Wangsa Maju seat after its previous lawmaker defected in 2009.

The announcement was made by party de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Bandar Tun Razak here last night where the opposition leader took the stump and told voters to continue backing the candidates as it vies to keep Malaysia's capital an opposition bastion.

Pakatan Rakyat won seven of the eight federal seats contested in the capital in Election 2008.

Anwar's daughter, Nurul Izzah, will be defending Lembah Pantai, Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim will stand in Bandar Tun Razak, party vice-president Chua Tian Chang will defend Batu and Ibrahim Yaakob, who lost the Setiawangsa seat in the last elections, will contest there again.

Anwar said he was confident that urban voters, known to be opposition supporters, would continue to back the party's candidates at the May 5 ballot.

On Ibrahim, Anwar said the candidate had won in all polling districts for the Setiawangsa seat but lost on postal votes. There are about 12,500 postal voters in the constituency where several army camps are situated.

"But I am certain this time around it will be different," he said.

PKR has gone on an energetic effort to court military voters by recruiting ex-officers who have been on a nationwide tour making exposes on alleged corruption in the defence sector.

Many of them will be contesting throughout the country.

Tan, on the other hand, will face an uphill task of redeeming PKR's "embarrassment" and defend the mixed Wangsa Maju seat following Wee Choo Keong's defection.

In Election 2008, PKR won the federal seat with a razor-thin majority of 150 votes, but lost the seat two years later when Wee quit the party in 2010 over dissatisfaction with the issue of sand theft in Selangor.

The Malay community forms the largest voting group in the constituency with 35,258 voters (53.28 per cent), followed by the Chinese at 24,000 (36.27 per cent) and Indians at 5,741 (8.68 per cent).

Umno appears confident of winning the seat with Malay support but observers note that with the demographic split into three camps — PKR, Umno and PAS — the Chinese votes could decide who takes Wangsa Maju.

Nurul Izzah could also face an upset in her fight to retain Lembah Pantai due to alleged fraud after she claimed more than 4,500 postal voters moved into her constituency illegally.

The numbers are enough to wipe out the majority she garnered in the last elections.

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