

Black 505 Gatherings More Than Just Rallies, Say Strategists
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By Alan Ting

KUALA LUMPUR, June 5 (Bernama) -- The post-general election rallies of the opposition parties are perceived to be more than just avenues for the opposition and their supporters to censure the Election Commission (EC) over alleged election irregularities.

Several political leaders and strategists believe the rallies, organised at various places, are an attempt to condition the mind of Malaysian youths who would reach the voting age of 21 in the coming years.

They feel that the youths would be indoctrinated to support the opposition pact "to correct" the alleged imbalances and unfair electoral system in the country because the majority of those who attend these rallies are youngsters.

"We are talking about three more million new voters in the next five years. Once they manage to shape this opinion in the young people, they (the young people) would register as voters and support these parties in the next election," said MCA central committee member Datuk Ti Lian Ker.

A rally to express dissatisfaction over alleged irregularities in the 13th general election has been planned for June 15 in the city centre as part of the Black 505 gatherings which began three days after the May 5 polls.

Elaborating, Ti said the opposition parties, especially the DAP, had successfully convinced many Chinese voters to reject the MCA and Barisan Nasional in the recently-concluded election and they would continue to do so until the next general election.

"They (the opposition) are good at this. They know very well who to target, how to target and how to maintain the support. They don't just organise the rallies for the sake of getting people to rally behind them. It is always a two- or multi-pronged strategy being adopted here," he explained.

He claimed that prior to the general election, the DAP's main strategy was to get Malaysians, especially the Chinese and young voters, to believe that the opposition pact can bring about a change in government and this explained why most of the Chinese voters supported the opposition candidates, from the DAP, PAS or PKR.

As the opposition pact failed to wrest Putrajaya, he said, it shifted its strategy by harping on issues alleging that the election results were unfair due to the current electoral system and argued that they had garnered more of the popular votes.

Ti claimed that the opposition parties were also pushing for Malaysians to change the electoral system, by suggesting that it should be a one man, one vote system.

The opposition pact also took advantage of the new social media instruments to gain support, he claimed.

"It was through their Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts that they spread this kind of message. Their aim now is the 14th general election," he said.

A political strategist who does not want to be identified said "many voting decisions were made emotionally" with the exposure to the earlier conditioned memory playing an important part in deciding whom to vote for.

He explained that one would have one's mind conditioned when one engaged and viewed lots of information through pictures, YouTube videos and status comments on Facebook, Twitter or messages on mobile WhatsApp.

"They are constantly being conditioned and stirred emotionally towards political party sentiments. All you need are tools such as visuals, audio and feeling.

"This is what is happening with the Black 505 rallies. Their strategy is posting the rally pictures (visuals), comments (feeling) and speeches (audio) as they know very well the party that engages strongly and properly uses these modalities will leverage better, even though the majority of the people do not favour them," said the strategist.

Political analyst Dr Sivamurugan Pandian, who is with Universiti Sains Malaysia, said the DAP-PKR-PAS opposition pact had successfully adopted a strategy by highlighting the need of the people to fight for their rights.

"The problem is when you paint the picture that everything is wrong. You can condition the mind of the people, especially the youngsters, that they need to stand up for injustice and against things that are wrong," he said.

He said such a strategy worked well due to the low political literacy among the population.

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