

Pakatan lawmakers admit plunge in support in Selangor 'worse than expected'

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Alarm bells have sounded for Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders following a recent survey which revealed plunging public support for the coalition in Selangor, with some conceding that the outcome was worse than expected.

While acknowledging that the pact expected support to go down, Selangor DAP chief Tony Pua (pic) nevertheless said he did not expect the results to be so critical.

PKR secretary-general Datuk Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, meanwhile, urged the opposition pact not to be in denial anymore but to accept the results of the survey which was conducted by Universiti Malaya's Centre for Democracy and Elections (UMcedel).

"I am very concerned, the results were worse than I thought. We know support had decreased but what concerns me is the extent of the drop, which reflects the direness of the situation," he told The Malaysian Insider.

In the survey conducted from May 10-19, it was revealed that support for PR in Selangor had plunged by 15%, from 50% a year ago to 35%.

But ominously for Barisan Nasional, voters disappointed with in-fighting in PR have not returned to the ruling federal government. Support for the coalition was at 15% last year and this year, it rose by 10% to a dismal 25%.

The survey also revealed that the percentage of those unsure about both coalitions and refused to answer the question in the survey stood at 40%.

Pua said he had expected a drop of between 5% and 10% and that the 15% decrease in public support is "very serious".

Although the UMCedel survey did not attribute the reasons for the decreased support, it is understood that several contentious issues could have contributed to it.

This included the seizure of the Bahasa Malaysia and Iban-language Bibles by the state's religious department earlier this year, management of the state's water resources, approval for the controversial Kidex highway and political turmoil over Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim's tenure in office.

Khalid has apparently lost the support of his PKR party and allies a year into his second term and is under mounting pressure from the PR leadership to resign over his handling of Selangor affairs.

However, the MB has defiantly said he would only quit after his term expires, despite pressure from fellow party members. PKR de facto chief Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said over the weekend that his party has chosen a successor to replace Khalid.

As such, Pua, a two-term Petaling Jaya Utara MP, said there is a need to take the survey results very seriously.

"It is important for Pakatan to take the study seriously and embark on necessary steps to regain the confidence of the people," Pua said, adding that the leadership is aware of this matter and are looking at ways to regain the trust of the people.

Saifuddin (pic, right) concurred, calling on all parties not to be in denial but to accept the results of the UMCedel survey.

"We should not be in denial as our reputation is at stake. Besides, UMCedel has its own reputation to look after in their research," he told The Malaysian Insider today.

"To me, the Pakatan leadership, especially in Selangor, has to be open and admit

there is a problem and we ought to solve this together."

He said the survey showed that PR still commanded the support from the majority of the people in Selangor but it will continue to deteriorate if the problems that have cropped up in the state are not immediately resolved.

"We cannot let this polemic go on and the solution must be given immediately."

He is sure that the consensus between parties in the PR coalition – PKR, PAS and DAP – was the key to resolve the problem. – July 21, 2014.

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