

**Pakatan risks losses if Selangor holds snap polls, say survey, analysts**  
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**BY ANISAH SHUKRY**

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) and PAS in particular could face losses in a snap election in Selangor as a percentage of fatigued voters have said they will switch support over the protracted menteri besar (MB) impasse, according to a survey and analysts.

The joint survey by The Malaysian Insider and the Merdeka Center from August 11 to 17 found that 8% of its 808 respondents, all from Selangor, would change the way they voted compared to the 13th general election.

The May 5 election last year saw PR win 59.4% of the popular votes in the state, which suggests that the alliance still has a slight upper hand in Selangor if an election was called soon.

But Merdeka Center's executive director Ibrahim Suffian said the current support for PR would be even worse than what the survey suggested, given PAS's latest decision to submit to the palace the name of its own assemblyman as one of the MB candidates.

"If a snap election is called and PAS continues to be a free agent and field its own candidates, it will split the votes, lose all the seats it contests, and deny PR the majority it needs," Ibrahim told The Malaysian Insider.

He said that even if PAS maintained it was still in PR and did not attempt a three-cornered fight, the non-Malays who voted them last year would reconsider their support.

"The other thing working against PR is the voter turnout. The willingness and enthusiasm will not be the same as last year," the respected pollster added.

"I sense that voters are fatigued by what is going on. It will mean a lower turnout, and this will have implications on potential elections."

Ibrahim added that an alliance comprising only PKR and DAP would not be enough to challenge Barisan Nasional (BN), as each side needed to maximise their votes.

"In the case of Selangor, BN has a solid vote bank among the Malays that is unlikely to shift. In an election where PAS is a free agent, it will take up some Malay votes from PR, while BN will maintain its vote bank."

He said that the choice of whether or not a "non-BN entity" would continue to rule Selangor depended on the PAS central committee.

"If they choose to stick with Hadi, this will allow the state to be squandered from PR's hands, Ibrahim said, referring to PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

The Islamist party had submitted the names of two PKR lawmakers and one Selangor PAS representative to the palace for the top post.

The nominations were apparently done without the knowledge of the party's central committee, which had decided on August 17 that PAS would not stake a claim on the MB post.

It also went against the PR presidential council's decision on August 17 to nominate only Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail for the position.

"The central committee has to choose between staying in PR or staying with Hadi," said Ibrahim, adding that the upcoming PAS Muktamar may see the differences among the party's factions come to a head.

However, political analyst Professor James Chin of Monash University was less pessimistic.

He said PR, or even a coalition comprising only DAP and PKR, could still win 30 to 35 of the 56 seats should snap polls be held.

Chin said that in the event of a three-cornered fight, with PAS up against Umno and DAP/PKR, PR supporters would vote for DAP/PKR as they are angry with PAS, and not the entire coalition.

"People want to punish PAS, but that doesn't mean they want to punish the other two parties. PKR and DAP can still win all the mixed and Chinese-majority seats," he told The Malaysian Insider.

"Only 20 seats are from Malay-majority areas, so PAS will not make much of an impact. PR will be able to win, but with a very slight majority."

Last year, PKR won 14 seats, DAP 15 and PAS 15, while Umno won only 12 seats.

Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said on Wednesday that the possibility of a snap election was up to the palace, but added that the priority now was to appoint a new MB.

However, PAS's decision to nominate three different candidates, as well as the royal rebuke PKR received for sending the name of only one candidate to the palace, may see the state legislative assembly dissolved and a state-wide election called. – September 7, 2014.

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/pakatan-risks-losses-if-selangor-holds-snap-polls-say-survey-analysts>