

Avoid three-cornered fights, Ambiga tells Pakatan

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The civil rights activist says the general consensus is that Barisan Nasional would emerge as the victor in three-cornered contests in GE14.

KUALA LUMPUR: Civil rights activist Ambiga Sreenevasan has advised Pakatan Harapan (PH) component parties to avoid three-cornered fights in the upcoming 14th general election (GE14).

She said regardless of what recent analyses on the matter may conclude, the general consensus has always been that Barisan Nasional (BN) would emerge as the victor in such a contest.

“I don’t need calculations and surveys to tell me that the danger in a three-cornered fight is that BN will come out the victor,” she told a forum titled “Emerging issues in Malaysia for the coming GE14” at the Wesley Legacy Centre here today.

The National Human Rights Society (Hakam) president said PAS’ current political stance and aspiration made the possibility of three-cornered fights (between BN, PH and PAS) “very real” and therefore PH should not engage in GE14 by wanting to put a candidate in every seat.

“That is the danger of how PAS is playing this and Pakatan Harapan must minimise this danger,” said the former Bar Council president and co-chairperson of electoral watchdog Bersih.

Ambiga however said the electoral prospects were not all grim for PH since it was unlikely that PAS would get ample support for itself in urban constituencies.

“In urban areas, PAS will do badly. The reason they did well previously was because they were under the Pakatan (Rakyat) umbrella and voters backed them with the aspiration that they would help in getting rid of the current government. That’s no longer the case.”

She said having PPBM as an ally had proven advantageous for PH as well, alluding to the possibility that the party would be able to win votes among those previously loyal to Umno.

“Bersatu (PPBM) has made inroads where previously Pakatan Harapan was unable to make inroads and this is very important because if there is no penetration into Umno ground then there is not going to be a difference (in electoral outcome),” she said.

The PH coalition consists of PKR, DAP, Amanah and PPBM.

PAS has refused to work with DAP, with whom ties were severed upon the termination of the Pakatan Rakyat in June 2015, and with splinter Amanah which was formed in September 2015 by ex-PAS leaders.

On April 12, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang shut the door on PPBM, saying that PAS will not work with parties that have relations with DAP and Amanah.

Hadi was responding to Mahathir’s statement that gave PAS a month to decide on working together to ensure straight fights in the election.

On May 11, PAS’ Syura Council endorsed the decision of the party’s muktamar (general assembly) on April 30 to end its “tahaluf siyasi” (political cooperation) with PKR.

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