

UMNO IS CONFIDENT AS PAS SCRAMBLES

Negara Malaysia

By SUHAINI AZNAM

ULU MUDA. Sat. — While the Barisan Nasional is fighting the Ulu Muda by-election campaign here with a guest speakers' list that reads like a Who's Who in the Barisan, sorely-stretched PAS has had to resort to broadcasting the taped speeches of some of us himinaries while waiting for crowds to gather at its ceramahs.

The well-moneyed, better-peopled Barisan election machinery has a joke about that: "Ceramah by remote control," was how one top party official contrasted the disembodied PAS voices emanating from loudspeakers with the Barisan's own high-profile personalised presence.

"His Master's Voice," he added when he heard that Trengganu state commis-

sioner for PAS, Ustaz Haji Abdul Hndi Awang, a master of oratory and a great crowd puller, was being heard more often in absentia than in the flesh.

There, in a nutshell, lies the great inequality in the election machinery of Umno and PAS.

Daily, this inequality is paraded before the 34,653 bemused voters in this parliamentary constituency who, amidst the carnival-like poster atmosphere that has transformed their dusty villages and the scurrying of party workers, are feeling flattered at being the focus of so much attention.

Umno is confident, PAS is scrambling to catch up in the four days before polling on Wednesday. Barisan is organising more than 30 ceramahs daily.

It has 60 cars at its disposal and about 100 are expected by polling day to

ferry voters to polling stations.

On hand to help woo Ulu Muda's padi farmers and rubber smallholders are Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen, Agriculture Minister Datuk Manan Osman, Information Minister Encik Adeb Adam, Welfare Minister Datin Paduka Aishah Ghani, Land and Regional Development Minister Datuk Rais Yatim and Deputy Ministers Dr Goh Cheng Teik and Datuk Haji Suhaimi Kamaruddin.

National and Rural Development Minister Datuk Sanusi Junid (who is also MP for Jerlun-Langkawi in north-west Kedah) is here every night directing operations. And tomorrow, Umno's Islamic trump card

Encik Anwar Ibrahim, also a Deputy Minister in the PM's Department, is scheduled to add the final persuasive touch.

Their presence and their election effort's better mobility shrinks considerably the 55 km drive over rough roads from Pendang to Sik, the two nerve points of election activity.

PAS' oratorical talent has to spread itself thin to reach Pendang's numerous kampungs and Sik's more remote rubber growing families. In all, it organises 11 or 12 ceramahs daily.

PAS Ulamak chief, its Kelantan State Commissioner Ustaz Nik Aziz bin Nik Mat its acting deputy president Ustaz Fadzil Mohamed Noor, its Youth chief Encik Mustapha Ali and, Trengganu PAS legal advisor Wan Mutalib Embong have to divide themselves between the

two areas, rushing between ceramahs.

Ustaz Haji Abdul Hadi is so much of a crowd puller that his ceramah two days ago grew to the point where the police deemed it had turned into a public rally and stepped in to break it up. But he is just one person and PAS supporters have sometimes to be just content with hearing his taped speeches.

Even the padi harvest has stymied somewhat the PAS effort. PAS headquarters in each Kedah State seat are supposed to send 20 party workers each to Ulu Muda for a total of 520, said a central PAS party organiser, but with harvesting going on in some padi areas under the Mada scheme nearer the coast, the turnout has been considerably less. PAS needs every last party worker it can possibly muster to cover the sprawling constituency which starts in central Kedah and slashes north-east in a broad band up to the border with Thailand.

Meanwhile, independent candidate Encik Ahmad Bakar has not even made an appearance in Pendang by all accounts. He is concentrating on Sik where Umno's foothold is less firm.

Umno itself realised this five days ago and switched from focussing on its stronghold in Pendang to Sik, confided Datuk Sanusi.

Umno women campaign

from house to house, visiting both uncommitted families as well as PAS homes. Umno's rationale is that winning over the PAS families is not as important as sparking off a lively debate with neighbours dropping in to hear and join in the debate, kampung style. Indirect persuasion is the objective.

Umno is the incumbent in Ulu Muda (its MP resigned the seal after being convicted of two offences under the LPN Act; his appeal to a higher court has yet to be heard) and the wealthier padi-growing district of Pcdang is securely in Umno's hands, admitted a kampung-level PAS committee member near Sungai Tiang, Pendang.

Since Pendang is the more heavily populated State seat within the Ulu Muda parliamentary constituency — 20,571 voters to Sik's 14,082 — a convincing majority in Pendang coupled with a decent "show" in Sik will automatically mean victory for Umno.

In Kampung Baharu, Pendang 37km from Alor Star, a hastily erected wooden PAS party dais stands directly opposite a regular shophouse lot used by Umno. At 5 p. m yesterday, the PAS dais was manned by three pak chiks, the Umno base was at least 20 strong and an Umno Perak van was parked outside.

If that is any symbol, PAS' scramble for a look-in will be frantic indeed.

PAS LEADER GETS DEATH-THREAT LETTER

ALOR STAR. Sat. — The MP for Kota Setar and former PAS secretary-general, Datuk Abu Bakar Umar, has received a death-threat letter from a writer claiming to be a PAS member.

The letter reminded Datuk Abu Bakar, a pro-Asri leader, of the shooting of former Negri Sembilan

Part of the letter, which bore a Kuala Ketil postmark and was dated March 5, read: "Don't be like Datuk Taha. The bullet doesn't know your face".

The letter was written and signed in Jawi. The writer also claimed to be a loyal PAS member.

Datuk Abu Bakar said at

here today: "I received the letter through the mail on Monday and handed it to the police the next day".

He said he suspected the writer was a "fanatical" PAS member.

Datuk Abu Bakar said he would not be deterred but would continue his political work as usual.

The letter also warned

Datuk Abu Bakar not to lose his political direction nor be arrogant.

He also insulted Datuk Abu Bakar, claiming to know him and his family.

Datuk Abu Bakar is among several PAS veterans expected to quit PAS soon to join a new party being formed by Datuk Asri.