

20 MAY 1997

Anwar-Melaka

NEW MELAKA CHIEF MINISTER TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK

KUCHING, May 20 (Bernama) -- Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that the new Melaka Chief Minister will be appointed this week.

He said that he has not decided on the candidate to replace Datuk Seri Mohamed Zin Abdul Ghani who died last week and required more time.

"I will make an announcement soon...within this week," he said at a news conference at the Kuching international airport before leaving for Manila.

Asked whether the post could be filled by any one of the state's executive councillors, State Assemblymen and Members of Parliament, he said that there were no laws to prevent any one of them from being appointed.

"That is why the Prime Minister has suggested that a reporter contests in by-elections," he said in jest.

Asked whether the appointment of the new Melaka Chief Minister would be based on the formula applied in Selangor because three state executive councillors were being investigated by the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA), he said jokingly: "We shall use the Pulau Pinang and the Sarawak formula to deal with Melaka."

In the case of Selangor, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad named former Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar as Menteri Besar-designate following the resignation of Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib.

Muhammad faces two charges in a Brisbane Court in connection with his alleged attempt to transfer an equivalent of RM2.4 million out of Australia.

Asked on the criteria for the appointment of the new Melaka Chief Minister, he said that the candidate should be a capable leader.

On whether the Barisan Nasional (BN) election machinery was facing any problem in facing the various by-elections, he said that in Teluk Intan, where the BN candidate was defeated, the BN's election machinery had proceeded smoothly.

In the Kemena state by-election in Sarawak, he said that Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, who is the state BN chairman, has reported that the BN election machinery did not face any problem.

Anwar said that the BN in the various states always work as a team and never viewed by-elections lightly.

In the Kemena state by-election on May 24 and 25, the BN's Datuk Celestine Ujang anak Jilan will face the DAP's Chiew Chiu Sing.

On chances of the BN's victory, he said that if the voters were to look at the BN's leadership and are confident of their future, they would be wise to vote for the BN. -- BERNAMA

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