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PM wants BN to work hard for elections

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has asked the Barisan Nasional election machinery to work hard for tomorrow's by-elections for Permatang state and Kuala Selangor parliamentary seats.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Dr Mahathir phoned him from London to convey this message on Sunday night.

"The fact that Dr Mahathir called me from London to inquire about the preparations for the by-elections illustrates his great concern about our party," Anwar said in his address to BN members in Kuala Selangor yesterday.

Dr Mahathir is now on a two-month leave, starting from May 19.

Selangor Menteri Besar-designate Datuk Abu Hassan Omar is contesting the Permatang state seat. He needs to win the by-election to be the Menteri Besar. His opponent is PAS' Mohd Maskuri Mardzuki.

Datuk Jamaluddin Adnan is contesting the Kuala Selangor seat against Ahmad Alang, also from PAS.

The by-elections are being held after Abu Hassan and Jamaluddin resigned simultaneously on May 2 in a direct swap of seats after Abu Hassan was named to replace Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib as the state's new Menteri Besar.

Under the state's constitution, a Menteri Besar must be a member of the State Legislative Assembly. When named to this position, Abu Hassan was the Member of Parliament for Kuala Selangor and was the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister.

In his meeting with the BN election machinery for the two by-elections, Anwar urged the voters not to take the two by-elections lightly as it will determine the election of the highest-ranking Selangor leader.

"I want to remind you that we (BN) have a big role in developing the country and solving the country's problems," he said.

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