

04/05/1997

Teluk Intan by-election: DAP picks Kulasegaran

Cheah Chor Sooi

PETALING JAYA, Sat. - The DAP has picked its Perak treasurer M. Kulasegaran as its candidate for the Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election on May 17.

Announcing the candidate at the party's headquarters today, DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said the DAP was aware that it would be very difficult to win the seat which fell vacant following the death of the Barisan Nasional's Ong Tin Kim last month.

"Of course, every time we fight in an election, we fight to win and Teluk Intan will be no exception," he said. Nomination day has been fixed for Tuesday.

"But we intend and we are confident that we can put up a great fight, not only for the rights of the voters in Teluk Intan but also for the people in the whole country," he added.

The BN has named Dr Chee See Choke, 49, who is Kampar Gerakan division chairman, as its candidate. Kulasegaran, 39, a lawyer, was the DAP's candidate for the Taman Canning state seat in the 1995 general election.

Bernama reports that Lim also said the DAP now faced the prospect of having to fight seven by-elections - the Kidurong state seat (May 12) and the Kemena state seat (May 24-25), both in Sarawak, the Teluk Intan parliamentary seat (May 17), the Kota Melaka parliamentary seat, in view of the sentences passed by the Melaka High Court on Lim Guan Eng, and the Repah state seat in Negri Sembilan following the death of the BN incumbent.

He said whether the DAP would contest in the parliamentary by-election in Kuala Selangor and the Permatang state by-election as a result of the swapping of the seats between Datuk Abu Hassan Omar and Jamaluddin Adnan, had yet to be decided.

"There can of course be different views as to whether DAP should contest the by-elections created by the appointment of Abu Hassan as Selangor Menteri Besar," he said.

"The argument against a contest is to give Abu Hassan an opportunity to have a new beginning first, while the argument in favour of a contest is to highlight the need for a clean and honest administration in Selangor and the people's demand for the cleansing of the Augean stables," he said.

Meanwhile, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said the party was wary that a repetition of its landslide victory in the 1995 General Election "may not come easily this time around."

However, based on the many achievements of the BN Government, he said, the people had every reason to support its candidate.

Describing the 1995 victory as "extraordinary and sign of acceptance by the people," he hoped voters would not fall prey to the opposition's tactic of garnering sympathy votes.

In the 1995 general election, the late Ong beat DAP's Proso Watman 21,641 votes to 7,673 to win by a majority of 13,968 votes. A third candidate, Pas' Hafith Jaafar, only managed 2,651 votes.

Dr Lim, who is also the Primary Industries Minister, maintained that the opposition had done nothing since the 1995 General Election to contribute constructive ideas aimed at developing the nation.

"They have not changed their image to meet the objectives of Vision 2020, and I see no reason for the people, especially urban voters (in Teluk Intan) to change their mind to vote for the opposition.

"This will ensure the majority given to the late Ong in 1995 is once again maintained," he told a Press conference after chairing a central committee meeting at the party's headquarters.

Dr Lim said preparations for the by-election "were in full swing."

On the party's delegates' conference to be held on Aug 16 and 17, Dr Lim said the party had chosen Vision 2020 Establishes A Malaysian Race through Social Justice in a Just and Equitable Society as the theme.

The two-day conference will be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

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