

27 OCT 1997

Ramli-Candidate

UMNO BUKIT GANTANG DIVISION HEAD TO CONTEST IN CHANGKAT JERING BY-ELECTION

IPOH, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- The Bukit Gantang Umno division chief, Mat Isa Ismail, has been chosen to be fielded as the Barisan Nasional candidate in the Changkat Jering state by-election.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, who announced the candidature on behalf of Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a news conference here today, said that Mat Isa, 49, a businessman, originated from Changkat Jering.

Ramli, who is Perak Umno Liaison Committee and Barisan Nasional chairman, said that Mat Isa has wide experience in politics and is actively involved as a political leader in the constituency.

Mat Isa became a teacher in 1967 before being involved in business since 1984.

He is the Bukit Gantang branch leader since 1980. He was the Bukit Gantang Umno Youth division head from 1982 to 1993 and was elected the Bukit Gantang Umno division head in 1995.

He served as the executive secretary of Umno Youth from 1987 to 1993 and was the confidential secretary of Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when he was Defence Minister, from 1993 to 1994, and remained with Najib when he moved to the Education Ministry, for one year.

Ramli said that in view of his experience since his days as a Youth leader up to divisional level as well as his appointment in the ministry, the state Umno liaison body felt that he was most competent to contest the seat.

Confident of BN defending its stronghold, Ramli said the party was already geared to face the opposition in the Nov 8 by-election.

The seat fell vacant following the death of Datuk Mohamad Razlan Abdul Hamid on Sept 26.

On nomination day on Wednesday, between 5,000 and 10,000 BN supporters will escort Mat Isa in a procession from the Bukit Gantang Umno House to the nomination centre at the Larut Matang and Selama District Office in Taiping.

Meanwhile, Mat Isa told reporters that he was thankful to Ramli and Dr Mahathir for having the confidence and trust in him to contest the seat, which he said carried a heavy responsibility.

He said although the state and central party leadership had never indicated any name for the candidature, as the party divisional leader, he had proceeded with the arrangements since last month to activate the BN machinery to ensure the party's success.

Mat Isa, a director of Innovest Bhd and managing director of Norlina Holdings Sdn Bhd, hoped all involved would work in close rapport and strive towards ensuring the party's success with a bigger majority.

The Changkat Jering state constituency has 3,585 voters, made up of Malays forming 63.3 per cent, Chinese 28.6 per cent, Indians 7.5 per cent and other races 0.6 per cent. -- BERNAMA

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