

19 NOV 1999

Candidates-Ghafar

CHANGE IN MELAKA BN CANDIDATES' LIST, TUN GHAFAR MAKES A RETURN

MELAKA, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Former deputy prime minister Tun Ghafar Baba was today named the candidate for Batu Berendam parliamentary seat after a change was made to the Melaka Barisan Nasional (BN) candidates' lineup for the Nov 29 general election.

Ghafar, 74, was earlier dropped from the list announced by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin at Seri Bendahara this morning.

He is the incumbent for the Jasin parliamentary seat which was taken over by Abu Zahar who moved from the Merlimau state constituency.

However Abu Zahar announced a reshuffle in the list this afternoon, naming Ghafar as the BN candidate for the Batu Berendam constituency, replacing Batu Berendam Wanita Umno head Datuk Hazizah Sultan.

Speaking to reporters at Seri Bendahara, Abu Zahar said the lineup reshuffle was directed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad through a telephone call at noon.

"I receive the call before performing Friday prayers in Merlimau ...for a reshuffle to be made by including Tun Ghafar as the candidate for Batu Berendam," he said.

"Following this change, the original candidate submitted by BN Datuk Hazizah has to step aside," he said.

Ghafar recently announced that he wished not to defend the Jasin parliamentary seat and had stated his intention to Dr Mahathir.

He had voiced a similar intention in the 1995 general election but was rejected by Dr Mahathir.

Abu Zahar said the reshuffle also involved the Rim state constituency.

Its incumbent Datuk Dollah Atan who was earlier named for the constituency was replaced by Melaka Wanita Umno head Senator Ramlah Abas, 56.

Dollah was not present when Abu Zahar made the announcement while Hazizah, who was at Seri Bendahara said she accepted whatever decision made by the party leadership.

Hazizah who won the Tangga Batu state seat in 1995 however expressed her disappointment as she was informed of the reshuffle after the state BN candidates' list was announced.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam said the reshuffle would not affect BN supporters in Batu Berendam.

Mohd Ali will stand in the Paya Rumpit state constituency.

-- BERNAMA

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