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BN candidates to be announced today

ALOR STAR, Mon. - Barisan Nasional will announce tomorrow its candidates for the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit by-elections, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is scheduled to visit Pendang and Anak Bukit tomorrow, is expected to announce the candidates.

Although it is a norm in the BN for the State BN chairman to announce the coalition's candidates, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last Friday that Abdullah would be making the announcement this time.

Syed Razak is the Kedah BN chairman and by-election director.

Umno, which is fielding its candidates under the BN banner, is said to be unable to make its decision early because there are several aspirants for the two seats.

An Umno victory in Anak Bukit will mean regaining the two-thirds majority the BN lost in the State Legislative Assembly at the last general election.

Former Pendang MP Datuk Othman Abdul, who is Pendang Umno division chief, and the division's Youth chief Najmuddin Darus are among the candidates being considered.

The choice for Anak Bukit is between former Kuala Kedah division chief Datuk Zakaria Said and the division's secretary, Hashim Jahaya.

Pas has decided on its candidates and the party's spiritual leader, Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, and acting president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang are scheduled to announce them in Pendang and Anak Bukit respectively tomorrow night.

Pas information chief Azizan Abdul Razak said today the candidates were young, locals and professionals.

This has narrowed the names of those speculated to Dr Mohd Hayati Othman, a doctor, for Pendang and Amiruddin Hamzah, a consultant engineer, for Anak Bukit.