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Abdullah-Candidate

BN TO FIELD TWO DIFFERENT REPS IN PENDANG, ANAK BUKIT, SAYS PAK LAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 29 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) will field two different candidates to contest in the July 18 by-elections in Kedah, one in the Pendang parliamentary and the other in the Anak Bukit state seat, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The candidates would be decided by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said Abdullah, who is also BN deputy chairman.

He described the nine-day campaign period as "short and snappy and good for the party.

Abdullah was speaking to reporters after opening the 2002 National Malay Undergraduates Convention at a hotel, here.

The Election Commission today announced July 10 as nomination day and July 18 as polling day for the by-elections.

The two seats fell vacant following the death of the elected representative Datuk Fadzil Noor, who is also Pas president, on Sunday.

Asked whether the by-elections were significant in the current scenario, Abdullah said the BN regarded every seat it contested as significant since it meant one more vote in Parliament and in the state assembly.

Although the BN expected a tough fight from Pas in Pendang and Anak Bukit, he was confident there was a change of mood among Malay voters.

"I believe more and more people are beginning to realise what Umno is doing for Islam and the Malays. I notice a change of mood.

"It's not (like in ) 1999 when voters were influenced by certain circumstances, certain factors that happened at that time," he said.

He said there were no more internal bickerings now and feelings of unity were prevalent everywhere, including among leaders who were at odds.

Asked about yesterday's statement by MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek asking party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to take the cue from Dr Mahathir to bow out graciously, Abdullah said it was an MCA issue.

"MCA knows what's best for the party to enable the party to progress as a political party and a BN component," he said.

He said Umno wanted to see MCA grow into an influential party and could assist BN in achieving its objectives.

On the elections for Umno supreme council posts, Abdullah said the matter had not been discussed by the council and might not deliberate on it in the near future.

-- BERNAMA

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