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Ghani: Johor BN can win new seats

TANGKAK, Fri. - The Johor Barisan Nasional is confident of winning all the additional six parliamentary and 14 State seats in the coming general election.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who is also the State BN chairman, said although they were considered new constituencies, the electorates were the same voters who had given 100 per cent support to BN candidates in the 1999 and previous general elections.

He said the proposal by the Election Commission to have an additional 25 parliamentary and 59 State seats was a wise step to enable more elected representatives to serve the people better.

Speaking after visiting the State K3P Exposition here today, Ghani said currently some parliamentary and State seats were "too big with a lot of voters."

He said with the new constituencies, the areas and number of voters would be reduced and the people would be given speedier and more efficient service.

He said the 20 Umno divisions in the State would also be expanded to 26 in line with the new parliamentary constituencies.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said the State BN would abide by any decision on the allocation of seats.

Mohd Ali, who is also State BN chairman, today said he was confident BN leaders, especially Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, would make the right decisions.

He was speaking after officiating at the mosques cleanliness campaign held at the Bukit Durian mosque in Paya Dalam.

The redelineation exercise sees a new seat in Tangga Batu and three State seats namely, Tanjung Bidara, Klebang and Bukit Baru.

In Rembau, Negri Sembilan Umno chief Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad said a new Umno division was likely to be formed in line with the creation of Rembau as the State's new parliamentary seat.

Isa, who is also Menteri Besar, said the creation of new Umno division would be discussed by Umno supreme council and the party management committee.

The State Umno would form a pro-tem committee to oversee the formation of the new division.

Speaking after opening the new Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Pei Hwa in Pedas near here, Isa reminded all component parties in the Barisan Nasional not to "jump into the fray" with the creation of Rembau as the new parliamentary seat.

In Kuala Lumpur, political parties will begin preparatory work to set up divisions and branches in the 25 new parliamentary seats.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said it was Umno's tradition that after a delineation exercise, the party would set up new divisions.

"Once the proposals are gazetted, the Umno supreme council will decide to send in pro-tem committees to establish permanent divisions," he said.

The pro-tem committees would start the process to formalise the divisions which includes the holding of annual general meetings.

Political party leaders and the public have since hailed the move as appropriate and in the best interest of Malaysians.

MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said the party would definitely

set up divisions and branches in the new parliamentary constituencies.

He said if there was already a division in the constituency, then the party would only create new branches.

"Once the Election Commission finalises everything, we will study the details and set up new branches and divisions accordingly," he said.

MIC secretary-general S. Sothinathan said the MIC was prepared to set up new branches and divisions if the need arose.

Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye said under the party constitution, it could set up a division and maximum 12 branches whenever a new parliament seat was created.