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Abdullah-Election

ABDULLAH EXPECTS STRONG FIGHT FOR PENDANG AND ANAK BUKIT

ALOR SETAR, June 29 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the by-elections for the Pendang parliamentary seat and Anak Bukit state seat will be keenly contested.

This was because Barisan Nasional (BN) would go all out to recapture both seats while PAS would do anything to defend them, he said at a press conference after meeting Kedah BN leaders and members of the state Umno liaison body at the Kedah Menteri Besar's official residence, Mentaloon, here.

Both seats are presently held by PAS. The Election Commission (EC) today fixed July 10 as the nomination day for the by-elections for both seats while polling day will be July 18.

Both seats fell vacant following the death of their representative Datuk Fadzil Noor, who is also PAS president, last Sunday.

However, Abdullah was confident that BN would win both by-elections based on the preparations it had made and the increasing support for BN among the people.

He said the BN was ready to counter all the allegations to be raised by the opposition including issues on religion and education during the campaigning for the by-elections.

With the vacancy in Anak Bukit, the BN has 23 seats, PAS 11 and Keadilan one seat in the Kedah State Legislative Assembly which has 36 seats.

BN wants to recapture Anak Bukit, which it held before the 1999 general election, to have a two-thirds majority in the State Assembly while the opposition wants to deny BN the two-thirds majority.

Abdullah said the question of BN candidates for the by-elections had yet to be decided, adding that the Umno headquarters had yet to receive the nomination from Kedah Umno.

Responding to a question, Abdullah said it would not be right to use the results of the two by-elections as a yardstick for the next general election.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said the security situation in both the constituencies were under control.

He did not expect the transition of power from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to him would be made an issue during the by-elections.

-- BERNAMA

JM AO