

Kedah to see straight fights except in two state seats

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ALOR STAR: Except for two state seats with three-cornered contests, Kedah will see straight fights between Barisan Nasional and the opposition in its 15 parliamentary and remaining 34 state constituencies.

The two seats with three-cornered fights are Gurun and Bukit Selambau.

In Jitra, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali turned up at the Kubang Pasu nomination centre to support Barisan candidates.

In Gurun, Kedah MCA chairman Datuk Beh Heng Seong, who is the incumbent, is pitted against Parti Keadilan Nasional Youth exco member B. Kalaivanan and businessman Tan Choy from the DAP.

Kedah MIC chairman Datuk V. Saravanan will defend the Bukit Selambau seat against Kedah Keadilan deputy chief Mustafa Khalid and Kedah DAP

treasurer G. Gnanaguru.

Both seats are considered safe for Barisan. The contests to look out for in Kedah are in the Baling, Sik, Pokok Sena and Kuala Kedah parliamentary constituencies where PAS have fielded their heavyweights.

Of interest is Baling where the battle of the *ulamak* will take place between incumbent Taib Azamuddin Md Taib, 54, and Datuk Dr Masitah Ibrahim, 39.

In Sik, Kedah PAS commissioner Azizan Abdul Razak, 60, faces former Kedah exco member Datuk Dr Wan Azmi Wan Ariffin, 58. The seat was vacated by PAS Datuk Shahnnon Ahmad who won with a majority of 478 in 1999.

Kedah PAS deputy commissioner Mahfuz Omar, 47, is defending the Pokok Sena seat that he won with a 3,637 majority in 1999 against another former Kedah exco member, Datuk Paduka Abdul Rahman

Ibrahim, 54.

In Kuala Kedah, PAS personality Mohamad Sabu, 49, is making a bid to retain the seat that he won with a 991-majority in 1999 against lawyer Hashim Jahaya, 41.

PAS also fielded Mohamad Sabu and Taib Azamuddin in Alor Mengkudu and Bayu respectively in the party's quest to capture Kedah.

Alor Mengkudu and Bayu were won by Barisan with majorities of 440 and 2,361 respectively in 1999. The Kubang Rotan contest is between incumbent Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, 59, and Keadilan vice-president Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, 40. Syed Razak won the seat with a 1,985 majority in 1999.

In Kuala Nerang, former Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Affifuddin Omar is taking on incumbent Mohamad Yusoff Zakaria who won the seat by 821 votes in 1999.