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Nomination-Kepala Batas (Analysis)
PAS "AS GOOD AS DEAD" IN KEPALA BATAS

KEPALA BATAS, March 13 (Bernama) -- Everyone knows it would be suicidal to contest a Parliamentary seat when the incumbent is the number one man himself, the Prime Minister.

However, an opposition candidate is "as good as dead" in Kepala Batas, home to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is defending the Parliamentary seat for the seventh consecutive time since 1978.

This time, he would be challenged again by Abdul Khalid Rasid, a businessman who is also Kepala Batas PAS committee member.

Khalid had already admitted that he was not confident of defeating Abdullah.

"I know I'm going to lose but I will not lose my deposit," he said.

PAS was already seen by many as waving the "white flag" when the party failed to field a formidable candidate to contest the Kepala Batas seat. PAS President Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang had once expressed his readiness to contest there.

However, it was just talk and no action -- like firing blanks from a gun.

In the 1999 election, Abdullah obtained 19,985 votes, defeating Khalid who only managed 8,810 votes.

Abdullah joined Umno in 1975 and was fielded as the BN candidate for the Kepala Batas Parliamentary seat in 1978. He won with a majority of 5,029 votes.

He was then appointed as the Parliamentary Secretary of the Federal Territory Ministry.

Political analyst, Prof Datuk Dr Syed Arabi Idid said Abdullah had built a good and strong image ever since he succeeded Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad as the fifth Prime Minister last October.

As for the opposition, it would be even worse as they no longer had any strong issues to play up in their campaign for this election.

Penang Puteri Umno chief Azlina Mehtab Mohd Ishaq said feedback obtained from voters aged between 21 and 40 showed that they were

amazed
with Abdullah's personality and his administration style.

"No PAS candidate could defeat him," she said.

In fact, Azlina believed that PAS purposely fielded a candidate just so they could prevent Abdullah from having more time to campaign in other states.

The Kepala Batas constituency had 39,622 registered voters.

-- BERNAMA

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