

PAS insists on Sungai Aceh, confident of victory

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By Susan Loone

PAS will not budge from its decision to vie for the Sungai Aceh state seat despite having to meet its ally PKR in a tough fight against Umno in the looming polls, fixed for May 5.

"For your information, PAS is contesting the Sungai Aceh seat," the usual soft spoken state PAS commissioner Salleh Man (left) firmly repeated in answer to questions posed by reporters in Pongsu Seribu, Tasek Gelugor, last night.

"Let's wait for nomination day (on Apr 20). We will not be discussing the matter with the state PKR," he added, after a ceramah where PAS announced that it will go for two parliamentary and six state seat.

"The decision had been made at Pakatan Rakyat' s central leadership in Kuala Lumpur meeting the day before (Monday) and this is final," the Permatang Pasir incumbent assemblyman, reiterated.

Salleh was responding to questions if PAS could fare well in the coming polls if it was engaged in a three-cornered fight with PKR and Umno, as the battle would split Pakatan's votes between the party's candidate Yusni Mat Piah and PKR's Badrul Hisham Shaharin.

Yusni is state PAS Youth chief, while Badrul Hisham, popularly known as Chegu Bard, is Solidarity Anak Muda Malaysia chief, who contested and lost narrowly to Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin in 2008 in Rembau, Negeri Sembilan.

Ambushed by announcement

It is learnt that PAS was taken aback when state PKR chief and caretaker Deputy Chief Minister I Mansor Othman confirmed Chegu Bard's (extreme right in photo) candidacy for the Malay rural seat on Monday night.

Asked if he were aware of the sudden announcement, Salleh replied "it was weird (pelik)".

However, he denied that the parties were locked in a bitter struggle, saying that ties between PAS and PKR remains strong and stable.

Salleh, who is Penang Islamic Affairs Council president, said it was not a problem for any party to announce its candidates for seats it wishes to contest.

However, every party entering the polls battle expects to obtain the support of its allies, Salleh added.

"In seats we are not contesting, we will instruct our party machinery to support Pakatan

candidates, so that they can win," he said.

"Under the Nibong Tebal constituency, where Mansor is expected to contest, we are placing our candidate in the state seat of Sungai Aceh so that there will be momentum and encouragement for our supporters to work together," he added.

"We will prove that we can compliment each other so that we can win the parliamentary and the state seats," he stressed.

Sungai Aceh was traditionally a PAS seat but the party handed it over to PKR in the 2008 election, where it's candidate Azhar Datuk Ahmad lost by a narrowly margin (250 majority) to Umno's Mahmud Zakaria.

PKR would have agreed to PAS contesting the seat if Parit Buntar incumbent MP Mujahid Yusuf Rawa, a Penangite, were fielded there instead of Yusni.

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