

Nomination ends - it's a straight PAS-BN fight

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KUALA BESUT BY-ELECTION The small town of Kuala Besut is best known as the gateway to the Pulau Perhentian resort islands, but today it comes under the spotlight for a completely different reason.

A little over a fortnight ago, the incumbent BN assemblyperson Dr A Rahman Mokhtar passed away from lung cancer and the campaign to decide his successor starts with the nomination day this morning.

If BN wins the by-election, the status quo prevails.

However, if PAS scores, an unprecedented situation will arise with BN and Pakatan Rakyat each holding half of the 32-member state assembly – a hung assembly.

Umno is fielding civil engineer Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman against businessperson Azlan Yusof from PAS. The stage is now set for the first by-election since the 13th general election on May 5.

LIVE REPORTS

10.25am: PAS spiritual adviser Nik Aziz Nik Mat leaves the Kompleks Rakan Muda.

NONEAt the same time, Kuala Besut by-election returning officer A Rahim Jusoh says he is satisfied with the nomination papers of both candidates and there was no rejection.

In line with that, he states that the two candidates jostling for the Kuala Besut seat are officially PAS' Azlan Yusof and BN's Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman.

NONE10.18am: PAS supporters yell out "Hidup Islam" (Long live Islam), to be answered by the repeated cries of, "Hancur hijau, tolak pembangkang" (Destroy green, reject opposition) from the BN camp.

This is followed by the reading of the 'zikir' recital by PAS.

10.06am: The 2,000 BN supporters outside the nomination centre now break into song, singing the official Umno song while waving party flags.

NONE10am: Kuala Besut by-election returning officer A Rahim Jusoh announces that the nomination period has official ended.

With this, it's confirmed that it will be a straight fight between Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman and Azlan Yusof.

With this over, the candidates will draw lots to decide their position on the ballot paper.

9.45am: PAS vice-president Husam Musa says a PAS win at Kuala Besut will "aid (Second Education Minister) Idris Jusoh (below)", who he claims is "clashing" with Terengganu MB Ahmad Said.

NONE"This is because Mat Said is seen as not having a solid political agenda. (He) is not bringing any progress.

"He is still MB but is having a difference in opinion with Idris. With this win (by PAS), Mat Said's position will be threatened... (But) You still can't change the MB because his is too strong.

"We (PAS) get the seat, he (Idris) gets to benefit politically," Husam said.

Meanwhile, PAS supporters continue to chant "Allahu akbar" and prayers. Their numbers have continued to swell, now exceeding 3,000. The weather, while gloomy earlier in the day, is now turning hot.

9.38am: PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang departs from the centre as he is going abroad today.

9.23am: Seems like it's going to be a straight fight between PAS and BN as there are only two parties in the nomination centre, with no surprise independent hopefuls showing up.

NONEAfter posing for pictures for the media, both candidates await the Election Commission (EC) officers to finalise the nomination process.

The nomination period is between 9am to 10am.

9.20am: Over at the PAS camp, while initially quiet, supporters begin to chant "Allahu akbar" and "hidup Islam" (long live Islam) as PAS spiritual adviser Nik Aziz Nik Mat arrives at the nomination centre.

He is escorted by two guards and several PAS leaders such as syura council secretary Nik Zawawi Salleh.

Nik Aziz then greets his fellow Pakatan leaders also waiting outside the nomination centre.

Meanwhile, on the BN side, there were occasional shouts of "Gelombang Biru" (blue wave), in reference to the coalition's colours.

However, the overall situation is still calm. At 200 metres apart, supporters of both camps are just barely out of earshot of each other.

NONE9.15am: PAS Kuala Besut by-election campaign director Husam Musa (left) arrives at the nomination centre.

Also arriving is BN deputy chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin and other BN supporters. They take the chance to greet with their rivals before settling down to wait for the nomination process to be over.

9.05am: When met by Malaysiakini outside the nomination centre, Terengganu PAS commissioner Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut says he is grateful that the march to the centre and the nomination of candidates has proceeded smoothly and the situation has remained calm.

"Today looks okay. We will continue with our campaign even though it is fasting month. We have arranged Youth programmes, Muslimat and others.

NONE"I always say, this by-election is important to determine the state legislative assembly (candidate)... Insyallah we can achieve victory," he said.

Also waiting outside the centre is PKR deputy president Azmin Ali, PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali and information chief Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, as well as Azlan Yusof's wife and children (above).

9.00am: Led by DPM Muhyiddin Yassin, Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abd Rahman and 2,000 BN supporters march towards the nomination station. They march silently, without chanting a single slogan.

NONE8.55am: Before the march, Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Said (left) takes the stage at the BN gathering point 700 metres away from the nomination centre. He urges supporters to vote for the BN candidate on July 24.

He vows that the state government will continue to develop Kuala Besut as hoped by the people.

8.50am: Three BN supporters accidentally enter the lane towards the PAS supporters, leading to cheers from the latter.

The drizzle has finally stopped, but the skies remain overcast.

8.44am: DAP's Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang and Vincent Wu arrive at the nomination centre, with Lim greeting and waving to PAS supporters, whose number has swelled to over 2,000 people.

Also entering the nomination centre is former Selangor exco member Ronnie Liu.

8.40am: The drizzle lightens. DPM Muhyiddin Yassin arrives at the BN gathering point in his official car, 20 minutes before the nomination.

He arrives together with several other Umno leaders, including secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin, Malacca Chief Minister Idris Harun and Umno publicity chief Ahmad Maslan.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Said, Second Education Minister Idris Jusoh and Gerakan acting president Chang Ko Youn are also present.

8.30am: Kompleks Rakan Muda - BN candidate Tengku Zaihan Che Ku Abdul Rahman arrives at the gathering point.

The 37-year-old engineer greets supporters along the way.

The drizzle seems to affect the presence of BN supporters as there are only roughly 500 people gathered here 30 minutes before nomination.

While many crowd into the camps that have been set up, many others remain standing outside with umbrellas.

They are waiting the arrival of Deputy Prime Minister cum BN deputy-president president Muhyiddin Yassin to head the march to the nomination centre, which is approximately 700 metres away.

8.25am: Kompleks Rakan Muda - PAS candidate Azlan Yusof arrives at the nomination centre with his supporters.

NONETHree minutes later, he is accompanied by Abdul Hadi, Terengganu PAS commissioner Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut, Mahfuz Omar and other members of the PAS leadership, to the centre.

PAS and BN supporters are separated by a distance of 100 metres.

8.10am: Persimpangan Jln Raja-Jln Tembila - PAS supporters enter Jalan Tembila, chanting takbir as they head towards Kompleks Rakan Muda, about 1km away.

The number of supporters reach some 1,500.

azlan8.05am: Persimpangan Jln Raja-Jln Tembila - Abdul Hadi leads PAS candidate Azlan Yusof in the march to the nomination centre as light drizzle continue to fall. Accompanying them is PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar and the party's Terenaggu leadership.

Azlan Yusof is garbed in a green baju Melayu. He is escorted by Abdul Hadi and Terengganu PAS commissioner Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut, together with several central and state party leaders.

8am: Persimpangan Jln Raja-Jln Tembila - The drizzle is no deterrent for about 300 PAS supporters awaiting the arrival of PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and PAS candidate Azlan Yusof, who are currently at the Kg Raja mosque performing the solat hajat.

7.55am: Kompleks Rakan Muda - The drizzle becomes heavier as BN supporters start to gather.

Right now there are close to 200 people at the scene, many of them receive the blue BN shirts being distributed from a small truck near the nomination centre.

Umno vice-president cum Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein arrives.

7.30am: Kompleks Rakan Muda - At least 200 police personnel are seen either gathering or guarding check points around the nomination centre, including several units from the Light Strike Force (LSF).

Overhead, a police helicopter is seen circling.

Malaysiakini also sighted several Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) trucks while en route to the nomination centre, but it is unclear where are deployed to.

7.30am: Persimpangan Jalan Raja-Jln Tembila - Light drizzle starts to fall on PAS supporters beginning to gather at the intersection.

7.30am: Kompleks Rakan Muda - About one-and-a-half hours to nomination, there very few supporters at the BN gathering point a few hundred metres away from the nomination centre.

Many of the chairs under the camps remain empty and none of the big shots are spotted.

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