

Teluk Intan may see Mah vs DAP's Superman fight
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It could be a battle between Gerakan president Mah Siew Keong and DAP leader Hew Kuan Yew, fondly known as 'Superman' in the Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election, as the latter said he had "no objection" to the party naming him.

This came after Mah was reported yesterday as saying that he was ready to fight if given the mandate by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Hew, who had turned down the party's previous offers, said several political considerations had brought about this change of mind.

"The central leaders had discussed with me the matter many times, my earlier stance (on refusal) had been very firm.

"But after the final talk last night, and as everyone not wanting the political tsunami to end in Teluk Intan, prompted me to re-consider," he told Malaysiakini when contacted today.

Hew, well-known for his fiery speeches, had publicly declared his refusal to contest for elections or to hold political positions, even a party post, leaving him burden-free to campaign for DAP candidates.

Asked if the change of mind is paradoxical, Hew said he had to compromise due to the current situation.

According to the Oriental Daily, Hew had also won support party grassroots' support with Teluk Intan DAP division and six branches recommending him and former Jalong assemblyperson Leong Mee Meng as candidates yesterday.

The last time Hew contested was back in 1999, when he was buried by former Selangor Gerakan exco member Lim Thuang Seng in the Bukit Gasing state seat by a majority of 1,021 votes.

The Teluk Intan-born orator was popularly called 'Superman' by his supporters as he often appeared in his trademark Superman T-shirt.

State DAP to submit candidates list soon

Meanwhile, a Perak DAP source said that the state leadership had prepared a candidates list to submit to the central leaders after last night's meeting.

The source also revealed that for Perak DAP leaders, Hew was not a preferred candidate.

However, the final decisionmaker - the DAP's three-person selection committee comprising acting chairperson Tan Kok Wai, senior party leader Lim Kit Siang and secretary-general Lim Guan Eng - is expected to announce the candidates soon.

The by-election has been necessitated by the death of DAP MP Seah Leong Peng, 48, from cancer on May 1.

In the 13th general election, held last year, Seah beat Mah (right) and independent candidate Moralingam Kannan by 7,313 votes.

Mah, who was awaiting the green light from BN top leadership to contest, was a two-term Teluk Intan MP and deputy minister before being beaten in the last two general elections.

Meanwhile, Perak DAP said in a statement that it had four names on its candidate list that would be submitted to the central leadership.

"The state committee expects to submit the list after Bukit Gelugor by-election nomination day on May 19, and the secretary-general Lim Guan Eng will announce the candidate before Teluk Intan nomination day," the statement reads.

It also pointed out that Teluk Intan is a mixed seat and therefore, the party should name a candidate who is welcomed by all races.

The parliamentary seat has 60,843 registered voters, comprising 42 percent of Chinese, 38 percent of Malays and 19.5 percent of Indians.