

'Why no posters of Najib in Permatang Pauh?'

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By Susan Loone

PMTG PAUH The campaign period for the Permatang Pauh by-election has entered its fourth day, but there are no posters featuring Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak with the BN candidate, PKR noted today.

Its Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin said this was unlike other election campaigns, where Najib would be prominently featured in posters and banners with the BN coalition's candidates.

This time around, in Permatang Pauh, most banners and posters feature the BN candidate Suhaimi Sabudin. Portraits of him with Najib are no where to be seen.

Sim questioned whether this had anything to do with the former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's intense criticism of Najib on the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) funds.

"This shows that Umno has brought its internal political bickering to Permatang Pauh," Sim said at Pakatan Rakyat's daily press conference in Penanti.

"We would like Suhaimi to answer: who does he support? Najib or Mahathir? Who does the Permatang Pauh Umno division support? And who does Penang Umno support?" Sim asked.

"Suhaimi must decide. For if he wins and is caught in this political struggle, how will he serve the people in Permatang Pauh?"

No Abdullah posters too

Sim said his party noticed the absence of Najib posters after surveying the length and breath of Permatang Pauh.

He asked if Suhaimi agreed with Mahathir in urging Najib to step down as prime minister if he cannot do his job.

"Do they agree that Najib is a liability to the party and needs to resign?" Sim asked.

Sim recalled that in August 2008 when PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim re-contested the Permatang Pauh by-election, Mahathir was in the midst of attacking former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah was Mahathir's successor after the latter stepped down in October 2003.

"Abdullah, a lame duck PM, performed badly in the 2008 national polls and so Mahathir

started to attack him," said Sim (centre, pix above).

"During the 2008 by-election in Permatang Pauh, there were less posters and banners of Abdullah but still, there were some hanging here and there," he added.

"This time around, however, there are none at all of Najib and we are wondering if history would repeat itself and if these are the signs that Najib will also resign," he said.

Mahathir in Penang

Meanwhile DAP's Bukit Mertajam MP Steven Sim noted that Mahathir would be in Penang on Thursday, to present a talk at Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Mahathir, Steven Sim (left) said, was most welcome to come to Permatang Pauh, where four candidates are vying for the parliamentary seat for which the by-election will be held on May 7.

Besides Suhaimi, the other candidates are PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Parti Rakyat Malaysia's (PRM) Azman Shah Othman and Independent candidate Salleh Isahak.

"If Mahathir comes to Permatang Pauh, he can explain to the people about 1MDB. He is the best person to talk about it as he was the former prime minister and is knowledgeable about the country's finances," Steven Sim said.

1MDB, a federal-funded investment venture, is Najib's pet project and is mired in financial controversies and allegations of mismanagement.

Mahathir has been raising questions on RM27.3 billion out of the 1MDB debt of RM42 billion, which he says has not been unaccounted for.