

## **Zahid makes 'chicken sacrifice' pledge to help Sg Besar fishermen**

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SG BESAR POLLS Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today made a 'chicken sacrifice' pledge (*janji potong ayam*) to help fishermen in Sungai Besar if they voted for Barisan Nasional at June 18 polls.

"We (BN) are not asking for a lot. We are not asking for money... just votes!" Zahid told a crowd of about 300 local fishermen who were present to receive their monthly allowance from the Malaysian Fisheries Development Board.

"Don't just say in front me but you don't vote. I promise. *Janji potong ayam*," said Zahid to a cheering crowd comprising largely of Chinese fishermen from around Sekinchan.

"If the fishermen here vote for Budiman, I check the ballot boxes, for sure I will come back here again...," he said.

The 'chicken sacrifice' inference harks back to an ancient practice in some parts of the Chinese community, to seal a solemn oath with the blood of a freshly-killed chicken.

Zahid earlier reiterated that all fishermen with Zone B licences can now apply to hire foreign workers as crew members on their vessels.

"For the people in Sungai Besar, write a letter to (Sg Besar Umno chief) Datuk Jamal (Yunos) and he will pass it to me.

"I will check, I will give (permit) to hire foreign workers," said Zahid, who is also Home Minister.

Zahid related that the government understood that shortage of workers is a problem faced by the fishermen and promised to alleviate their woes.

At one point, Zahid asked the crowd why the government did not allow them to hire foreigners, and one man shouted "I don't know".

"Now the government has allowed," said Zahid to claps and cheers.

At the event, Zahid together with Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek, also launched the Automatic Identification System (AIS) for deep sea vessels.

Zahid said the system will be installed for free in all 2,630 trawlers registered under Zone B.

Among others, the system would help to prevent cases of Malaysian trawlers being allegedly 'towed' into Indonesian waters and arrested for purported encroachment.

Within Malaysian waters, the system could also serve as evidence in alleged cases of trawlers encroaching into Zone A designated for coastal fishermen.

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