

PAS to pick 'non-smoking' candidate for Galas
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PAS will field only a candidate who does not smoke in the upcoming Galas by-election, reports said Sunday, as the party seeks to boost its Islamic image.

PAS, which is a part of the opposition alliance, said the candidate it will pick for the poll in northern Kelantan state must display good Islamic character and the person must be a non-smoker.

"I will reject smokers from the start. They are not only ruining their health but also wasting money," PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat was quoted as saying by the *New Sunday Times* paper.

He also told the Malay newspaper *Berita Minggu* that the candidate must also pray regularly and be a non-gambler.

No date has been fixed for the by-election, but PAS has said it will field a candidate to contest the poll.

There are no clear religious edicts banning smoking, but Nik Abdul Aziz has said previously that some Muslim scholars consider smoking as forbidden.

In 2007, PAS said it was planning to field in national polls only non-smoking candidates or those who were willing to kick the habit.

The Islamic party has also asked its candidates to take on oath promising to divorce their wives if they to defect to other parties.

- AFP

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