

PAS: Ku Li is double-edged sword for BN
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Umno may end up hurting more than they would benefit by appointing Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah as their election director for the Galas by-election.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali said while Razaleigh, better known as Ku Li, is arguably the most influential Umno leader in Kelantan, the latter may prove more a liability going into this contest as the impact of his leadership in this campaign will cut both ways.

"He is a double-edged sword," Mustafa said at a press conference at the PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Prior to his recent appointment as election director for Galas, Ku Li had been left on the fringes of Umno politics, particularly after making his stand clear in demanding for a bigger cut from oil royalties and opposing Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's move to instead give *wang ehsan*.

Umno however changed their tune with the coming by-election, hailing the Kelantan prince as their best choice to lead the charge in Galas and going as far as to plan a grand welcome for him at the KL International Airport on his return from overseas this Sunday.

PAS strategic director for Galas, Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman, noted that although Ku Li holds much influence in Gua Musang overall, he may not be as effective as Umno hope him to be in Galas.

And should Umno decide to put Ku Li up as their candidate, he faces the very real possibility of losing.

"He won the Gua Musang parliamentary seat in the last general elections, but if you break it down according to state constituencies, he lost in Galas.

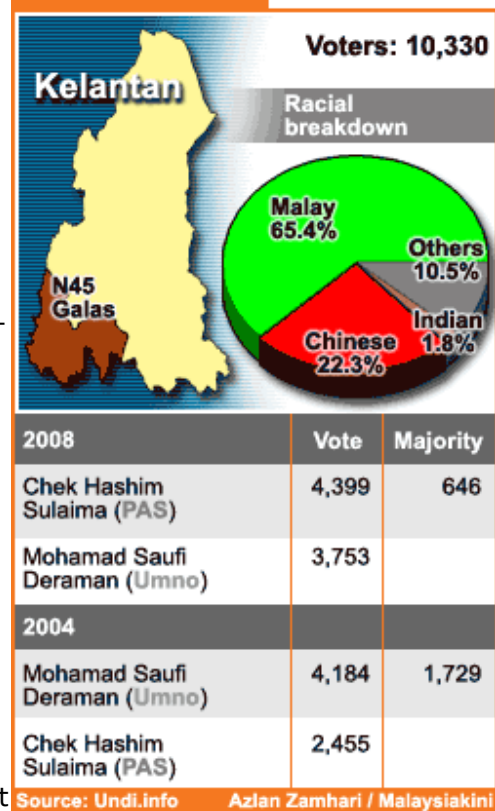
"Our candidate Dzulkefli Mohamed received 4,143 votes to Ku Li's 3,826 in Galas," he said, though he quickly added that the full force of the BN machinery could easily smother their advantage.

Abdul Halim pointed out that despite PAS being the incumbents, Galas remains an Umno stronghold and that it would be unwise to take this by-election lightly.

"At this point, we are putting our chances at 48 to 52 in favour of Umno, but we are optimistic," he said.

Rahimi's claims will not affect PAS

Galas state seat



Mustafa nevertheless does not believe Ku Li would agree to contesting the seat as Umno's candidate, saying it is too small a role for the prince.

"He is PM material. What would he achieve by going down to become a state assemblyperson? Even if he wins he would just be a regular assemblyperson.



"I've known him for a long time and personally I don't think he would agree to contest," he said.

On PAS' candidate for Galas, Mustafa said they will wait for Kelantan PAS to submit their shortlist of potential candidates, after which the party will announce its pick at a "suitable time".

Mustafa stressed that Galas is important for PAS as it is their seat to lose and should that happen, it would definitely impact on the PAS-led state government.

"But it is also important for Umno. For Umno to lose would be even worse because this is their stronghold and their election director is their most influential leader.

"This by-election is important for both Umno and PAS because this is about image," he said.

When asked if PAS' campaign would be affected by the explosive allegation by ex-Anwar Ibrahim aide Rahimi Othman, who claimed he was forced to sign a statutory declaration related to the Pakatan chief's on-going sodomy trial, Mustafa brushed it aside.

"This case has nothing to do with the by-election. There are so many local issues in Galas, and I don't think it (Rahimi's allegations) will affect our chances," he said.

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